

# DEAL - OR NO DEAL?



Members of RCT branch outside parliament, speaking up about something (can you guess what?)

terms and conditions.

We are also discussing a new pay and grading structure to tie in with the implementation of Job Evaluation.

In order to implement the changes to terms and conditions, the authority has issued a 'section 188 notice', which basically gives them the option to dismiss over 10,000 staff and re-engage on new terms and conditions. (An explanation of section 188 can be found on page three).

The aim of the changes in conditions is to minimise compulsory redundancies. Whilst some of the proposals seem reasonable, some of them are considered by all the unions to be unacceptable. (More detail on the proposals on page two).

Dave Bezina, UNISON Regional Organiser, has made it clear to management that; "Whilst we appreciate the financial situation the council faces due to decisions made in Westminster, there is a limit to what we will give up. We are not prepared to accept *any* change to hide the impact of these cuts. Politicians are going to have to make some tough decisions because we are not going to let the government off the hook. We are happy to work with RCT to make savings but there is a line beyond which we will not go."

Peter Crews, UNISON Branch Secretary, stated: "Ultimately, the final decision on what we accept will be down to the membership. We will be consulting members as widely as possible. If members want to have a say in their own future, they need to make sure they participate in any consultation. And if they reject any offer, they need to be prepared to back up that rejection with some sort of action. This is the biggest challenge UNISON has faced since it was formed and solidarity will be crucial. We want to avoid a dispute but members will make that decision".

**From the moment the Liberal-Con coalition took power, it was clear that, despite the fact they had no mandate, they were going to embark on an eye watering programme of cuts to the public sector, on a scale not seen since the second world war.**

In terms of RCT, the council will receive £344m in core funding from the Assembly Government in 2010-11, a fall of 1.7%, and will have £13.9m in capital funding, a fall of 20%. Overall this means the council will have to make cuts of between £15 and £20 million this year, with further cuts to follow in future years.

Unlike England, there is no freeze on council tax, which could help to offset the savings, but as we go to print no decision has been made on this.

Commenting on the overall settlement in Wales, Dominic MacAskill, UNISON regional head of local government, said: "Given the context of the terrible financial settlement that Wales has been subjected to, this announcement today does represent a balanced budget setting approach. However, this is still a difficult settlement for local government in

Wales and, when you take inflation into account, is a significant across the board cut in funding which will lead to lost jobs and services which Wales can ill afford"

"Nevertheless UNISON is still committed to working constructively with local government employers and the Welsh Assembly Government to attempt to minimise the negative impact these cuts will have. Clearly we will look to protect the jobs and services that our communities depend on.

"I would also hope that councils will value the dedication and hard work of their predominately low paid staff by not simply looking to make savings by undermining their pay and terms and conditions. If the quality and levels of public services are to be maintained then staff are councils' biggest asset."

In an attempt to archive the savings being forced upon RCT, management have begun negotiations with the recognised trade unions to discuss potential savings to minimise the impact on both service provision and staffing levels. A number of proposals are on the table, including efficiency savings, possible cuts in service provision and changes to staff

# Changes to terms and conditions

## A rough guide to the proposals

As part of the councils plans to reduce spending, several changes to staff terms and conditions have been proposed. It is suggested that, if implemented, these changes will minimise the need for compulsory redundancies - although it is unlikely there will be no compulsory redundancies at all.

The authority has embarked on extensive negotiations with the trade unions around these proposals. As we go to print the nothing has been agreed, or rejected.

A number of working groups have been set up to discuss the fine detail of the proposals and the main negotiating teams are meeting twice weekly.

We have asked the authority to provide us with financial data so we can better understand the logic behind the proposals. Management have been very co-operative in providing the information we have asked for, although as we go to print there are one or two issues HR are still working on – including costings for alternative pay and grading structures.

The number crunching is proving to be very complex; there are a number of issues that will have a knock on effect on everything else. For instance, changes to service provision may free up more money for the pay and grading, whilst changes to pay and grading can have a knock on effect on service provision. Throw into the mix the financial settlement from the Welsh Assembly, and the fact that no cap has been put on council tax, and we have a very complicated balancing act.

Whilst we are some way from agreeing anything, we are very close to establishing what we definitely cannot agree on. We have made it clear from the union side what the 'deal breaking' issues are and management are considering them.

Once we have reached a point where we think we have exhausted negotiations, we will be consulting members on the way forward.

In the mean time, the basic proposals are as follows:

**Overtime** – Any extra hours worked above contracted hours will be at single time. All overtime to remain voluntary. It has been indicated there will be a differential between planned overtime and genuine emergency call outs, it is not yet clear what that differential will be.

**Weekend Working** – to be paid at single time.

**Car Allowances** – All essential users' allowances will be stopped. Mileage will be paid at the maximum allowed tax free by the HMRC, currently 40p per mile.

**Sickness** – First 3 days of sickness unpaid. Suggested saving of £2 million per annum.

**Some allowances to be stopped** - such as qualification, key holder, stoking and SEN allowances

**On Call / standby payments:** Currently many different systems and payment rates. All to be reviewed and rationalised.

**Honoraria policy:** To be reviewed.

**Protection:** to be reviewed. All existing life time protection arrangements to be scrapped.

At the same time we are in discussions around the implementation of Job Evaluation

All first round evaluations have been completed, but it is accepted that some jobs will have changed and some evaluations will need to be updated.

A new pay and grading structure has been drawn up - a 15 point spot salary structure with all points anchored at the top of the current increments for each scale, if agreed, this will be the first in Wales.

Clearly, the question on everybody's lips is "how much money will I be on after all this?" The simple answer is, until we have agreed what the new pay and grading structure will be and bottomed out the negotiations, nobody can know for sure where they will appear on the structure. We do not intend releasing pay information until it has been finalised. We can assure you though that we are working towards being in this position as soon as possible.

The Authority does not intend backdating any increases in salary that may arise out of JE. We have been advised that, based on the current pay and grading structure, it would cost in the region of £4.5 million for each year of backdating. The authority are adamant this is unaffordable

It is proposed that there will be no protection for anyone whose salary decreases due to job evaluation.

It is proposed that the changes to terms and conditions and job evaluation will take effect from 1st June 2011.

In addition to the savings in spending proposed by management, UNISON has also proposed some efficiency savings suggested by members. We have also suggested some opportunities for income generation.

The situation is very fluid and the chances are by the time you read this some of it will be out of date. The best way to keep up to date with significant developments, is to make sure you are on our e-mail list. If you are not already on our list, e-mail your details to [rctunisonadmin@btconnect.com](mailto:rctunisonadmin@btconnect.com).

Any significant developments will also be posted on our website - [www.rctunison.org.uk](http://www.rctunison.org.uk)

## Make your voice heard, join UNISON

Ring RCT UNISON, 01443 400401

Ring UNISON Direct 0845 355 0845

Join on line - <http://www.unison.org.uk/join>

# Section 188: What's that all about then?

## A beginners guide to section 188



**Everyone in employment has a contract. It is a two way thing, the employee agrees to turn up for work and carry out specific functions; the employer agrees to then pay the employee a specific amount of money, give them time off and so on. The details of what each party to the contract agrees to are known as the terms and conditions.**

A contract of employment is a legally binding agreement, therefore both parties are bound by its terms and neither party can alter the terms without the agreement of the other.

There is a widely quoted myth that an employer can simply change your terms and conditions of contract by giving you thirteen weeks notice. It is not that simple. There are only four ways in which a contract can be changed

1. The employer and employee agree on the change or the employee accepts a change by his conduct, e.g. by carrying on working under the changed contract without protesting.
2. If the contract itself provides for changes.
3. The contract is varied by collective agreement which is binding on individual employees.
4. Unilateral variation of the contract by the employer. This is where the employer either implements the new term without the consent of the employee or simply terminates the existing contract and introduces a new one.

We regularly have small changes in our contract through collective bargaining. Our annual cost of living pay increase (remember those?), for instance, is a change to

the contract through collective bargaining.

At the moment management and the trade unions in RCT are engaged in negotiations around changes to contractual terms and conditions. If we can agree on those changes there will be a collective agreement (option 3 above). We must emphasise that the union membership will be consulted before we agree on anything. People who are not members of a trade union will be bound by any agreement made by the trade unions, so if non members want to have their voice heard, they should seriously consider joining a trade union.

If the employer and the trade unions cannot agree and the employer is determined to push through changes, they have to go down the route of termination of all staff and re-engagement on the new contract. To do this the employer has to follow Section 188 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (consolidation) act 1992. This sets out a minimum consultation and notice period. Because of the numbers involved in RCT this means a minimum of 90 days consultation, followed by 90 days notice of termination.

RCT has already issued the trade unions with a 188 letter to commence the negotiations around possible termination. This does not mean that people WILL be have their contracts terminated, but it does leave that route open. It is still the hope of all parties concerned that a collective agreement can be achieved.

If we find ourselves in a situation where there is no collective agreement and termination notices are issued, there are a variety of responses available.

The first option is to simply accept the changes and carry on.

The second option is to mount some sort of legal challenge. This could involve constructive dismissal, breach of contract, unfair dismissal or unlawful deduction of wages. At this stage it is impossible to know which of these options would be viable because we do not know what the new contract will look like or even if we will end up in a dismissal situation.

Thirdly, we could go down the route of a more traditional 'industrial' response. Again, without knowing what proposals will eventually be on the table it is impossible to suggest what that response might be.

Ultimately it will be down to the membership to decide what response they want to take. Hopefully we will not find ourselves in this position, at the moment all our energy is being put into trying to achieve a collective agreement.

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# The public sector Chainsaw Massacre

**Who will survive and what will be left of them?**



**Starring David Cameron  
Directed by Maggie Thatcher**

**It took several years for Margaret Thatcher to generate enough anger for people to riot on the streets, but the Liberal-Con coalition have managed to radicalise a new generation in six months. Whilst some of us are old enough to remember the Thatcher years, those venting their anger on the windows of the Conservative HQ and occupying universities were not even born when the Iron Lady was brought down by the Poll Tax Riots - and the fierce industrial disputes with the miners, dockers and print workers are just something they learned about in history lessons.**

Cameron has been repeating the old Thatcherite mantra 'There Is No Alternative' and during Prime Ministers Questions even said that he is proud to be seen as a 'child of Thatcher'. He is certainly on a mission to finish off what she started, the dismantling of the public sector.

We are constantly being told that we have unprecedented national debts that need to be dealt with. Is this true though? At the moment our debt stands around 60% of GDP. From 1918 to 1961 the UK national debt was over 100% of GDP, at the end of the second world war it was 300%. During that period the government introduced the welfare state, the NHS, state pensions, comprehensive education, built millions of council houses, and nationalised a range of industries. The public sector grew and there was economic growth.

Today, the coalition government wants to turn back the clock. It is set on dismantling the NHS and comprehensive education, and it is attacking the welfare state. It is not doing this because the country is on the verge of economic collapse, it is doing it because it is ideologically opposed to public services and the welfare state, and committed to handing over more of our public assets to big business.

Ireland shows how cutting public spending can damage the economy. The crisis in Ireland was caused by the collapse of its banking sector. The massive cuts in spending and public sector pay that followed have increased unemployment and sapped demand, causing the

economy to shrink further. Because of this, Ireland is now considered more at risk of sovereign default than before it started making cuts. Historical research clearly demonstrates that budget cuts actually provoke increases in the national debt by damaging the economy.

Cutting jobs this quickly and this deeply will slow down the economy, and therefore reduce the tax take. This makes the deficit harder, or even impossible, to close. A longer time scale would give economic growth the chance to do much of the hard work of deficit reduction, rather than relying on cuts and tax increases.

The biggest threat we face at the current time is not the deficit - it is the lack of economic growth. Those that argue for steep cuts often claim that this would boost growth by lifting private confidence and unlocking the spending of entrepreneurs and households, who would feel freer to spend without fear of future tax increases to repay the debt. However, economists have found no evidence to back such claims.

The best way to cut the deficit is to encourage growth. Laying off hundreds of thousands of workers is unlikely to do that, quite the opposite. It is not just the public sector jobs that will go. Public sector workers spend their wages in the local economy, purchasing goods and services from local businesses. Many local businesses also rely on contracts to provide goods and services direct to the public sector. Cuts on this scale will devastate some communities.

Then of course you have the services the community relies on, the schools, the meals on wheels, the health services, the police, the library, the leisure centre, refuse collections, road gritting and pothole repairs and so on. All of these things are being cut back at a time when people need them most.

If this is going to be detrimental to the country, why are the coalition going down this route? The general feeling is that it is an ideological. Economist Milton Friedman set out a theory of shock doctrine in the 1960s - taking advantage of crisis to wipe the slate clean, cut back the private sector and unleash the private sector. Suddenly, public money starts flowing into private hands. In 1982 he wrote: "Only a crisis--actual or perceived--produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable." This sounds uncannily similar to the situation we find ourselves in today.

It is a theory that has been put into practice many times, from Chile in the 70s, through Thatcher and Reagan in the 80s to the 'rebuilding' of post soviet eastern Europe and the 'democratising' of Iraq. In terms of providing wealth for the companies that join in the free for all, it has had mixed success. For ordinary people, without exception, it results in huge increases in inequality, with

many being condemned to poverty.

Despite what we are being told, there is an alternative. UNISON, along with many other unions, has presented the government with alternative budget savings that would reduce the deficit if adopted. UNISON supports an approach that taxes the bankers who caused the economic crisis (including a Robin Hood Tax on financial transactions), which clamps down completely on tax avoidance and evasion and seeks savings through scrapping projects like the replacement of the Trident missile system.

Whilst the Government tries to slash £18 billion from public spending in the next four years, an estimated £120 billion of tax is going uncollected each year through tax avoidance and evasion. Protest group UK Uncut allege that Vodafone alone owe £6 billion in unpaid tax. This comes at a time when the number of staff dedicated to collecting these taxes are being cut. There is something seriously wrong with this picture.

What we need is a progressive programme of investment, direct policies to create jobs, we should invest in areas such as housing, renewable energy and public transport.

This is a defining moment for UNISON and we are stepping up the the challenge with a mixture of old and new tactics. We are working closely with other trade unions to build a united campaign against the cuts. But, as previously mentioned, these cuts will hurt far more than just public sector workers so we are also building links with community groups.

We are producing materials undermining the myths surrounding the cuts, we are coming up with alternative savings, we are lobbying politicians, holding public meetings, using social networking and getting involved in protests.

As proof that UNISON is serious about this, in December UNISON set up a £20 million fighting fund to combat savage Government cuts to public services. The National Executive Council, the union's ruling body, agreed to set aside the £10m for national campaigning and to help regions and branches organise against job losses and service cuts. The money is on top of a further £10m available in the union's industrial action fund.

Dave Prentis, General Secretary of UNISON, said: "Twenty million pounds is serious money for serious times. We are facing the biggest onslaught against our members, and the services they provide, in our history. We are determined to use this money to help our members on the ground to fight for jobs and services. Today, we are sending out a clear message to the coalition government that we will not stand by and see our public services devastated, without putting up a fight. The money will be used to step up campaigning and to help our branches and regions combat savage cuts to jobs and services in their local communities."

"UNISON members are angry and frustrated that this Government has refused to look at any of many viable alternatives, to cutting public services. They are ideologically wedded to the private sector and are using the idea of the 'big society' as a smokescreen for privatisation and service cuts. The poor, the elderly and the vulnerable are paying the price for the bankers' recession."

"The money will also be used for joint campaigning with community groups and other unions fighting service



World famous street sweeper joins RCT UNISON outside parliament to make a drama out of a crisis.

cuts in their areas."

There is also the old fashioned option of strike action. However, a strike needs to relate to a specific dispute with an employer. With councils being encouraged to go their own way, such as the terms and conditions proposals in RCT, it undermines the possibility of coordinated national action. However, this may not be a bad thing as it means we are in control of our own destiny and not bound by other branches.

UNISON is in the process of organising a march and rally through Pontypridd in february 2011.

We are also building for a massive national demonstration in London on 26th march 2011. We are fighting to protect public services from the biggest attack it has ever faced. We urge all members to make the effort to join us for one day to march through London and help protect our jobs and our communities.

As Edmund Burke said: "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing. Do not allow evil to triumph. Do not do sit by and do nothing".

## March for the alternative: jobs, growth, justice

**19th February 2011**

**PONTYPRIDD**

**Assemble 11:30, Ynysangharad Park  
march through town  
followed by rally in Muni Arts Centre**

**26th March 2011**

**LONDON**

**UNISON will be joining with other unions  
to march through central London to tell  
the government they need to change  
course.**

R.C.T. Branch will be organising transport to the demo. We are fighting for *your* jobs and *your* communities, please make every effort to join us. Ticket details available soon.

<http://www.unison.org.uk/million>

# Education, education, education

It was with regret that Unison learnt of the ConDem government's decision to abolish the School support staff negotiating body (SSSNB) in England. This was only established last November and scrapping it shows no appreciation from the national government of the vital role support staff perform.

There is a clear need for a dedicated body to look at support staff's terms and conditions and Unison in Wales is committed to achieve the setting up of a negotiating body through discussions with the Welsh Assembly Government to recognise the work staff do.

This branch is well aware of the ever decreasing gap in the duties of teachers and support staff - but we see no closing of the chasm in relation to pay. Support staff are a committed group but too often cover for absent teachers even though it is not their role. We do not think this is acceptable.



The human touch in Pontypridd library makes a big difference to the community

All service Heads within RCT have been asked to review their service in light of the required efficiency saving. This includes Library services. There is no doubt that Unison members working within libraries care about the communities they serve. The communication and banter they enjoy with users is so important in small valley communities, but not necessarily so in big city libraries. Whilst Unison welcomes the use of advancing technology within library services we stress that customer service improvements need to be part of a staff consultation process and not a cost cutting measure to remove the human contact from library users.

Unison officers have met with library staff in recent weeks to discuss the proposals for savings and their views will be taken in to the negotiations.

2010 has been a challenging year for Unison members working in Education and Lifelong learning with restructures and reviews seemingly coming out of our ears. We have all been waiting for the admin review of the structure to begin. Originally planned for the Autumn you will probably all be aware that this has now been delayed pending analysis of the budget recently announced by the Welsh assembly government - something to look forward to in 2011 then!

**Dean Price, Education Convenor**



## The Equality Act, making equality real

The new and improved Equality Act came into force in October 2010, bringing some significant changes to the law covering equality.

The point is to streamline and combine previous Legislation to make things easier to understand. It replaces previous legislation (such as the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) and ensures consistency in what you need to do to make your workplace a fair environment and to comply with the law.

The Equality Act covers the same groups that were protected by existing equality legislation - age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity - but extends some protections to groups not previously covered, and also strengthens particular aspects of equality law.

If you have an interest in Equality issues then our Branch Equalities officer, Anita Lewis, would like to hear from you as she can't be everywhere in the Authority and needs a little help to identify any problems that you or someone you know may have. Contact her on on 07890102105

## CD MOTORS LTD PORTH

### Discount for UNISON members

Members are eligible to receive a **10% discount** on services such as MOT's, mechanical repairs, tracking, tyres, engine management, brakes etc.

Proof of UNISON membership and valid form of ID will be required in order to obtain the discount.

For further information please contact CD Motors on 01443 686139, North Rd, Porth

It's a .....

# Small world

Many trade unionists rightly question why their unions get involved in international activity at all. With significant troubles of our own to worry about right here, why bother with problems faced by workers in Iran or Somalia for example. The answer is probably best summed up in one word - solidarity. Defined as - "unity, as of a group or class, that produces or is based on community of interests", this idea more than any other forms the very basis of trade unionism. And it doesn't stop at national borders.

Wales has a fantastic history of solidarity with workers in other countries. From the labourers who risked their lives fighting Franco's fascists in the Spanish Civil War, to the recent entourage of women workers from Swansea who travelled to Gaza and drew attention to the difficulties faced by Palestinian workers.

Both here and in the rest of the U.K. we sometimes take for granted the right to read publications such as Branchline. But trade unionists in many other countries risk intimidation and even death for active membership of a union.

In 2010 UNISON has supported a wide variety of actions by workers in other countries. Perhaps most significant has been the role played by both our union and the wider movement in bringing to peoples attention the on-going plight of our brothers and sisters in Colombia. Trade unionists, human rights activists, community leaders, opposition politicians and indigenous leaders continue to be assassinated in the South American republic; their voices silenced. And, in a new and macabre development there has been an upsurge in the murder of children. Hundreds more civil society leaders have been the victims of death threats, forced disappearances, torture, displacement, or imprisonment without trial.

In UNISON Cymru/Wales we have been concentrating our efforts on two areas in particular. Firstly we have been highlighting the issues faced by Burmese political prisoners. According to The Burma Campaign (UK), 2200 prisoners are currently being held without trial in that country. We have also continued to campaign for the release of The Miami Five - Cuban nationals who have been held for ten years in U.S. jails for attempting to protect Cuba from terrorist attacks.

The last year has held many positives for those involved in international activities - most notably the continuing success of the Chavez administration in Venezuela, and the recent release of pro-democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma. With continued involvement from UNISON members in RCT, the coming year promises to hold more successes - both for ourselves fighting the Con-Dem government, and our fellow trade unionists struggling for better lives around the globe.

**Mike Williams, branch International officer**



UNISON Welfare is a registered charity that was formed 100 years ago this year. The aim of the charity is to assist UNISON members in need. There is funding for Wellbeing breaks for members who have had a serious illness and a short break would aid their recovery.

There is a holiday fund for families with children who have not had a holiday for 4 years or more. There is a further fund for members who find themselves in financial difficulty.

During this particularly difficult financial period it is useful to know that UNISON Welfare may be able to assist with debt (not loans or credit cards) and they are linked to PAYPLAN a not for profit organisation which offers free advice and assistance in dealing with creditors. PAYPLAN can be contacted on 08003893302, they are specifically trained to assist with pro forma letters to creditors, advice on dealing with creditors/bailiffs and have already helped members in Rhondda Cynon Taf branch. UNISON Welfare can be accessed via the internet whereby the site can give considerable information as well as having copies of all the application forms for the above benefits. The branch has a Welfare officer who can assist with applications and give general advice.

On a separate note it would appear that few members are aware of a "rule book" benefit for members who sadly pass away. The benefit is in the form of a lump sum payable upon the death of a member, the payment is on a sliding scale based on years of membership. Whilst it would not cover the cost of a funeral, it can assist at such a difficult time. Forms for this benefit are held in the branch office.

Each year UNISON Welfare has a number of fund raising activities to which all members are able to engage in, these have included walking the great wall of China, climbing up to Machu Pichu, cycling across the USA, walking Hadrian's wall and many others. The UNISON Welfare site will have details of the 2011 challenges, have a look something may appeal to you!

You can support the UNISON Welfare charity every month by participating in the UNISON Octopus lottery. Each month there is a top prize of £1000 ( and two smaller prizes) all you need to do is contact the branch office for a form and pay as little as a pound a month (there is a maximum of £10 per month) for your unique number, members in RCT have already won prizes so what are you waiting for?



[www.unison.org.uk/octopus](http://www.unison.org.uk/octopus)

# Branch Line

The page that is tastier than left over turkey

## MAJOR BULL



Wikileaks have been in the news a lot lately, with details of really important secret stuff being posted on the interweb. However, Nick Clegg, who is apparently something important in government, contacted me recently, distraught at finding that not one of his e-mails has been deemed sufficiently interesting to be released by Wikileaks.

"I send lots of emails, regularly - to some really important people" he told me. "Why am I not part of this big diplomatic scandal? I sent an email to the Prime-minister of Belgium only yesterday demanding that they move the fat content in their milk chocolate from 13% to 15%. Tell me how is that not worth leaking?" I Asked whether he had e-mailed anything that had anything to do with international foreign diplomacy or global economics, rather than Flemish dairy products. Clegg paused. "Not really, David doesn't let me near that sort of thing."

However, there have been some leaks of stuff closer to home on the Mikileaks website, including:

A list of essential sites that must be protected at all costs to enable RCT to function properly including: the Albion Cafe in Cilfynydd, The Boot in Aberdare, A Fish Called Rhondda in Ton Pentre, the pie factory in Treforest, Booze 'n Fags in Clydach vale and Whetherspoons in Pontypridd\* (*\*other tacky boozers are available*)

St Winifreds Church in Penrhiwceiber are making a bid to stage the royal wedding.

The council have decided not to buy a water cannon. They are going to buy a chocolate fountain instead.

The research assistant of a leading member of the RCT cabinet is a spy from Swansea.

The Father Christmas in the Heritage park is not the real one, just some beardy bloke from Treherbert

Angry that Ton Pentre FC were not part of the England World cup bid, a councillor from the Rhondda e-mailed the Swedish FA to tell them David Beckham's wife used to be a Spice Girl - thus ruining England's chance of hosting the cup.

Watch out for more Mikileaks in the future

**Major Bull**

PS: hello to Jason Isaacs

## AN A TO Z OF TRADE UNION HISTORY

### C is for ... CLASS STRUGGLE.

We're all in this together! How often have you heard that lie in the past 12 months?

The question of class (and we don't mean whether you have it or not) has been fundamental to organising effective trade unions since their very beginnings. How we relate to the means of production, distribution and exchange lies at the heart of our class society. Whether you exist by owning those means - factories, shops, businesses and banks (and thereby exploiting those that labour in them) or whether you survive by selling your labour to them.

In a society where the ruling class do their utmost to disparage and malign working class people (often portraying us as lazy, work-shy and ignorant), the trade union movement reminds us that our class are capable of far greater feats than we are presumed to aspire to.

By celebrating the events at Tolpuddle and Tonypanydy, by arguing that our children have as much of a right to a university education as those that go to Eton or Harrow (and by protesting when governments try to put that education beyond our reach), working class people show time and again that we will fight for the common good.

At times it appears that our class is so divided that any struggle to improve our lot is an uphill one. And those at the top of society benefit most when working-class people are divided. However, there is a constant need on their part to divide us into different socio-economic groupings, sexes, sexualities, abilities, nations, regions, etc, etc, and to pit one against the other. When workers see through those divisions, when they come together as trade unionists and fight for a decent and just society, that is when we are at our strongest.

**United we stand. Divided we fall.**

## The class divide



**Alan B'stard, Tory MP, is a posh member of the ruling class**



**Peter Crews, UNISON Branch Secretary, is not posh and has no class**