



# Workers Rights & Employment

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### **RWR02.1: Support for Firefighters**

(Originally passed – Autumn 2002 Conference)

The Green Party expresses its wholehearted support for Britain's firefighters in their bid to secure a fair and appropriate pay award and safer working conditions.

The Green Party recognises the skill and commitment needed to be a firefighter. These are people who potentially put their lives on the line every day in order to protect our homes and communities.

We urge all local authorities to listen to the Fire Brigades Union and give our firefighters the pay award and improved working conditions they deserve.

### **RWR03.1: Firefighters' Dispute**

(Originally passed – Spring 2003 Conference)

This conference notes that there is increasingly vitriolic criticism of, and political attacks on, the Fire Brigades Union's industrial action.

This conference reiterates the Green Party's support for the firefighters in their dispute and reaffirms its recognition of the fundamental right of firefighters, and all workers, to take industrial action, including strikes.

Conference calls upon GPEX to publicise our support.

### **RWR03.2: Green Party Relationship with Trade Unions**

(Originally passed – Autumn 2003 Conference)

Conference notes:

1. That this week's TUC conference displayed renewed dissatisfaction with New Labour's attitude to the unions and with its policies affecting workers' rights.
2. That Tony Blair continues to have a more

constructive relationship with the Confederation of British Industry, which represents only corporate interests, than with unions representing many millions of British citizens.

3. That no other major party in England & Wales offers policies as attractive to unions and union members as the Green Party.

Conference therefore welcomes the party executive's ongoing process of developing closer cooperation with the unions on matters of shared interest, and instructs the new executive to continue to develop this process.

### **RWR04.1: Cockle Pickers**

(Originally passed – Spring 2004 Conference)

The Citizen's Advice Bureau is calling on Government to establish a Fair Employment Commission to enforce the rights of millions of the lowest paid workers in the UK

Conference notes that:

1. The UK remains the only EU country without an enforcement body charged with ensuring that employers comply with their legal obligations.
2. A wholesale lack of regulation of unscrupulous and unlicensed gangmasters resulted in the death of 20 cockle pickers at Morecombe Bay.
3. The "Gangmasters" Bill, introduced in the aftermath of the tragedy, still does not provide for the creation of an "Employee's rights" enforcement body.
4. That the inclusion of the 10 accession states into the EU this May, will introduce further numbers of vulnerable migrant workers into Britain.

Conference instructs GPEX to join with the Citizen's Advice Bureau's to establish an "Employee's Right's" enforcement body.

Conference instructs the External Communication's co-ordinator to publicise the Green Party's views on this.

### ***RWR05.1: Support for Gate Gourmet Workers***

(Originally passed – Autumn 2005 Conference)

Conference:

1. Extends our solidarity to the Gate Gourmet workers in their on-going dispute.
2. Condemns the fact that Gate Gourmet have sacked existing workers and replaced them with temporary workers at even lower wages.
3. Condemns the actions of British Airways in ruthlessly reducing the operating margins of Gate Gourmet

producing a knock-on effect in their negotiations with their workers.

4. Notes that those workers are some of the most disadvantaged and exploited in Britain.

Conference calls upon the Green Party Executive to promote this position.

### ***RWR06.1: Repeal of the Anti-Trade Union Laws***

(Originally passed – Autumn 2006 Conference)

UK workers have the least rights of any group of workers in the EU and British trade unions are constrained by the most draconian anti-trade union laws in Europe, which prevent them from fighting to their full ability for the rights of their members. The Green Party, as a party which supports social justice and trade union rights, supports the right of UK workers to receive fair and equal representation in their negotiations with employers and their organisations, and to take industrial action when their rights are threatened.

We call upon the Green Party Executive to support the Trade Union Freedom Bill and to support the Campaign for the Repeal of the Anti-Trade Union laws.

### ***RWR08.1: Minimum/Maximum Wage***

(Originally passed – Autumn 2008 Conference)

British people work some of the longest hours in Europe, with some 3.6 million people regularly working more than 48 hours a week, yet 7 out of 10 people working over 48 hours per week say they would like to work fewer hours. For many however this is impossible, as they simply cannot afford to do so. Overwork is forcing workers into unhealthy lifestyles as they attempt to reconcile long working hours and family responsibilities, according to a report from the charity Working Families. Half of the parents surveyed were unhappy with their work and family balance. A majority reported that work dominated their lives, and family life suffered as a result. Working long hours also led to increased levels of stress, resulting in irritability, exhaustion and depression. At the same time, the gap between the most prosperous and the poorest in society has not been as great since the nineteen thirties. In 2006, around 4 million adult employees were paid less than £6.50 per hour. Two-thirds were women. 3.8 million children in Britain live in poverty. Since 1980 the poorest quintile of the population has experienced no growth in real earnings. Nearly twice as many people have relatively low incomes as 25 years ago. The average total earnings of FTSE 100 chief executives have doubled over the last five years to a new record of £3.2 million. The top three per cent of the population own three times as much as the whole of the bottom half of the population.

Therefore, the Green Party will campaign:

1. For the immediate ending of the British opt-out of the European Working Time Directive;
2. For the National Minimum Wage level to be increased to come in line with the Council of Europe Decency Threshold, which is set at

60% of net national average earnings (this would currently mean a minimum wage of £8.17 per hour);

3. A new top rate of income tax to be levied on incomes over 10 times the National Minimum Wage.

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### ***RWR09.1: Women in Employment and Business***

(Originally passed – Spring 2009 Conference)

- Medium and large-sized companies be required to undertake equal pay audits that compare the earnings of their employees and to take action to redress inequalities.
- Legal changes to make it much easier for women to take equal pay cases to court, and to allow women to take such cases as a group, with the support of the unions.
- Significant funding is put into encouraging girls and women to consider a broader range of careers.
- The law to follow Norway's in requiring that companies listed on the Stock Exchange have 40% of their board members being female within five years of the date of the passing of the legislation.