

GMB

Midland and East Coast Region

Regional Young Members' Newsletter



CALLING ALL YOUNG MEMBERS

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Hello all!

This week has seen GMB's annual Congress take place in Nottingham, marking 125 years since GMB was originally founded.

During the course of Congress 2 exceptional young members orientated fringe events were held—both seeing a good turnout. One focused on the requirement to be involved with the development of both apprenticeships and traineeships through working partnerships with local learning providers. The learning providers are the establishments that have the finances to operate these programmes, thus if we can help shape the programme before it is launched, it will help ensure that the quality of the scheme is meeting the necessary standards. The second discussed looked at how we build young members structures in Unions.

Both of these issues are exceedingly important issues for young members and our region needs to ensure we are behind these issues. Young people have the opportunity to make change, but this can only be achieved if we come together and work collectively.

This is why we need to get out there, make our presence known and grow our Unions, so that we, as young people can have a future that we and future generations deserve.

I hope you have a lovely summer and I hope to see you at some of our young members events over the forthcoming months.

Sarah Worth
GMB YOUNG MEMBER

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GMB NATIONAL YOUNG MEMBERS **NETWORK**

Ambrish Vyas has recently been appointed as one of our regional delegates to attend the GMB National Young Members Network. The women's reserved seat is still waiting to be filled and should you be interested in holding this post, please get in touch to receive a nomination form.

The network meets quarterly and focusses on priority campaigns for the GMB that predominately impact young workers. The network also look at strategies to help recruit, retain and service our young workers. There is also a political aspect to the forum which helps to serve with feedback to help shape Labour Party policy that will be of benefit to young workers in Britain.

The network is a fantastic opportunity to meet new people, attend training sessions and also is a great confidence booster in terms of negotiation and public speaking.

For more info, please e-mail sarah.worth@gmb.org.uk

MEMBER BENEFITS

* Motor Drivers Fund—where motoring offences are concerned, we are right behind you if you run in to trouble on the road * Discounted Holidays * GMB Travel Insurance * Car Insurance * Free PI Claims whether you win or lose!! * Workplace Representation * Discounted Panthers Ice Hockey Tickets * Car & Home Contents Insurance

MANY MORE BENEFITS AVAILABLE – SPEAK TO YOUR BRANCH FOR FURTHER DETAILS

How the “Near-Beverley” Hillbillies’ music machine kills fascists..

THE warmth of the summer’s day did little to take the eerie chill from the morning streets of Hull as we walked towards the city’s Paragon Square. This was the demo point where the *English Defence League* planned to gather. England flags, hi-jacked by scoundrels posing as patriots, were in evidence – but the feeble fascists’ desire to be heard and threaten havoc was practically non-existent.

UNITE and *GMB* members were out in strength with their banners and placards. The token police presence – another casualty of the austerity cuts – looked, as part-time coppers always do, slightly uneasy.

The Hillbilly Troupe, a collective of local musicians, along with Nahro Zagros, was at Victoria Square supporting local activists from trades unions, *Anti Nazi League* and local folk who were not prepared to have fascists on the streets of Hull. *Troupe* members are as diverse in age as they are in the music they perform. The youngest is 26 and the oldest a youthful 68. However they have two important things in common – a love of music and a hate of racism.

With an impromptu concert they demonstrated solidarity with members of the public and union activists and others who had stood up to be counted against the *EDL*..

Can we prove that the young and old are united in their approach to the *EDL* and in this approach show that their hate and selfishness, homophobia, ignorance and fear have no place on our streets and in our music?

It is no secret that these ultra-right groups have used music in their attempts to recruit young and impressionable people to their side.

Musician Lloyd Dobbs, 30, from the Hillbilly Troupe said: “Music can carry a message.

“The Hillbilly Troupe is a collective of musicians of all ages and backgrounds. Our band sings songs about struggle, songs learned from each other either past up from the youngest or down from the oldest member.

“It works, and we use songs as weapon to challenge the *EDL*. That is the way it should work when defending the diversity this country is proud of, whether you are a musician, a plumber or the school cook!

“Just as we do with the reverse learning and sharing with each other, concentrating all the time on stuff about hope not hate.

“The fact that the right-wing tabloids are fanning flames of discontent in the present economic climate does not help matters.”

Fascists like *EDL* want people to believe that immigration is the root of all our problems. Anyone taking time to discuss this with right-minded people will find that the root of our present system is actually capitalism gone wrong.

This has been true since the so-called hungry 1930s. When we had a north-south divide with the *Jarrow March* at one end and – in the south – a massive upturn in consumerism and home ownership. While Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was creating a cosy homeownership class in the Home Counties, people were being ignored and starving in the north. Sound familiar? In Nazi Germany – when everyone was suspicious of each other, parents were spied on by their own children and all were frightened to speak out, a brave man called Pastor Martin Niemöller is accredited with writing this:

First they came for the communists and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a communist.

Then they came for the socialists and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a trade unionist.

Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me.

Mick Murphy, also from *The Hillbilly Troupe*, explained: “In the previous decade we have seen an increase of other cultures in our communities and schools. Kids are now growing up and learning in a far more diverse society than their parents. It is now up to the young people who have embraced peers from other cultures in their classes, to take that understanding and education home, to share it with parent and grandparents. In this way we can move forward, share, learn and enjoy life together. A simple answer to *EDL* is that right wing politics ruined Hull and this country. Thatcherite Tories caused thousands of job casualty’s in our region, causing loss of opportunity in employment in the area with all the knock-on effects this brings. The Islamic community did not – and does not – control that. The fascists’ function is to divide and distract people away from the real cause of problems, which is capitalism. However, we all know the dangers that such mobilisations of drunken racists and fascists bring to local people, but especially those of Asian heritage. Therefore, we call on all progressive all sound-thinking people to oppose the spread of such racism and ignorance; to confront the fascists and to show that there is a better way than mindless prejudice and hatred – and to campaign together for a better life for everyone.”

Mick’s bandmate Dave Gawthorpe added: “The anger and frustration that is felt by the members of the *EDL* is mis-directed to focus on immigrants and British citizens of different cultures and deflects from the real culprits who are and have always been the ones who jeopardise a fair, equal and just society, those being the elite, right-wing ruling classes. The older and younger groups collaborating against the *EDL* is effective and powerful because the older generations bestow wisdom and remind us that this is how it’s always been. The younger generations offer hope that there are still people who are not brainwashed by the prevailing right-wing falsehoods of mass media and are willing to step forward and continue the fight against this modern dangerous new trend of fascism.”

Maybe the last word should go to Pete Seeger, the great American folk singer and human rights campaigner who still fights today to improve the lives of working people. Mr Seeger once said: “*We won’t get it with organising and we won’t get it with singing – but with a little of both we may do good things.*”

Kinda hits the right note...in a left-thinking way.

By Mick McGarry, GMB activist – Hull



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YOUNG MEMBERS

The GMB Midland and East Coast Region is looking to team up with Confetti Studios (Nottingham) and the GMB Nottingham City Branch to produce a short production on why young people need to be part of a trade union.

We are urgently seeking some responses to the following questions:

- Are you underemployed? Working on a zero-hours contract?
- Do you feel like you never have a voice in your workplace?
- Do you have works council? How do you feel about this? Does anything productive come from it?
- Are you an apprentice or currently undertaking a traineeship and paid a pittance wage?

These responses will be sent to some of the talented individuals at Confetti and transformed into lyrics for the production. The production will then be produced based on these responses, but made to be catchy to grab young workers' attention.

Young workers are more likely to be exploited at work and we need to get the information to them about their rights at the earliest opportunity possible. Just knowing that you can contact someone to offer support and provide you with the answers you require as and when a situation arises is invaluable. We need to reach out to our young comrades and ensure that we as young people receive fair pay, are respected within the workplace and will have a future that works.

If you would like to be involved in this production in any way, shape or form, please get in touch with us at Regional Office on 0115 960 7171 and ask to speak to Sarah. Alternatively, you can contact Sarah direct at sarah.worth@gmb.org.uk

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◇ Saturday 2nd August 2014—TUC Young Workers Forum: 12:00—15:00 at Unite the Union, Transport House, 211 Broad Street, Birmingham, B15 1AY
- ◇ GMB Regional Young Members Meeting— We are currently awaiting confirmation of numbers in order to be able to confirm location.

Please indicate your interest in attending any of these events by contacting Sarah at sarah.worth@gmb.org.uk.

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#).
Questions or comments? E-mail us at sarah.worth@gmb.org.uk