

## The Campaign for a Trade Union Freedom Bill

To celebrate the centenary of the introduction of the Trade Disputes Act 1906, this edition of *Federation News* is dedicated to the 2006 campaign for a new Trade Union Freedom Bill. Six general secretaries of unions representing nearly 4 million workers, outline why they believe restrictive trade union laws should be replaced by positive trade union freedoms.

But first the arguments for a Trade Union Freedom Bill are placed into historic, economic and legal contexts. **Keith Ewing** discusses the legal lessons to be learnt from the Trade Disputes Act of 1906. He suggests positive rights rather than legal immunities would be more appropriate for the 21st century. **Frank Wilkinson** and **Simon Deakin** track the economic impact unions have historically had on society and the role they play in reducing inequalities. **Jon Cruddas** goes on to argue that if labour wants to reconnect with the vast majority of workers, they must drop the rhetoric about a "new knowledge economy", acknowledge the growth in poorly paid service sector jobs and implement policies – like the Trade Union freedom Bill – which will help address current inequalities in society.

From the unions **Tony Woodley, Dave Prentis, Bob Crow, Billy Hayes, Mark Serwotka** and **Derek Simpson** explain by example why they believe the current framework of law needs updating to deal with globalisation, privatisation and outsourcing.

Finally **John Hendy, QC** looks at the legal detail of the Bill, summarising its six main proposals. As he says the proposed Bill is modest, moderate and mild. But it would mark a significant stride in the right direction.

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