

United Campaign UPDATE

Issue 11 Spring 2009
FREE

VISTEON VICTORY

DESPITE ANTI-UNION LAWS

In 2000 Ford hived off part of its operation to Visteon and in 2009 they nearly got away with writing off its former employees with nothing other than the statutory minimum redundancy over the 9 years of Visteon's life. This was in spite of promises in 2000 that Ford terms, including Ford's generous redundancy packages secured by union struggle, would apply to Visteon employees. They could get away with this because of the separate legal entity of limited companies.

On 31 March workers in Belfast, Lisburn, Enfield and Basildon were told in meeting of less than 10 minutes duration that they were to lose their jobs and would not be receiving their rightful redundancy and pension packages. In response the workers occupied some of the

“ The outcome shows what can be achieved when workers fight back ”

sites. The lawyers had to advise of the illegality, but the workers stuck with their cause and the union leaders did their best in the face of anti-union laws. This time it worked.

The Visteon workers won a major victory as the Morning Star reported on 1 May “after bosses

backed down and offered huge redundancy payouts.” Visteon workers will be given considerably increased redundancy packages and preferential treatment when applying for jobs with Ford in the future. The outcome shows what can be achieved when workers fight back.

But the problem of anti-trade union laws remains and the fight to establish fundamental collective rights in the UK continues. What

LESSONS IN HUMAN RIGHTS FROM TURKEY

The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has told us once more that the UK's human rights record is as bad as that of Turkey in relation to rights of assembly and association. The ECtHR in Strasbourg seems to be heading in the opposite direction to the EU's own European Court of Justice, which has crushed trade union and fundamental collective human rights in favour of business throughout the EU in the decisions in Viking, Laval, Ruffert and Luxembourg.

On 21 April, the ECtHR Judges in

Ford did with Visteon, British Airways did with Gate Gourmet, where the unions sterling efforts to help the workers were holed below the water by the anti-union laws.

The break up of companies, increases in privatisation and outsourcing generally, and the greater use of “atypical” workers like agency workers mean that Thatcher's laws are more effective at crushing workers in this century than they were in the last.

the Enerji Yapi-Yol Sen v Turkey case, unanimously decided the Turkish government's declaration which effectively stopped workers going on strike to attend a public meeting, breached the workers' fundamental rights.

It follows another recent case from the Strasbourg court Demir and Baykara v Turkey on 12 November 2008. The court changed its previous position and for the first time understood and accepted the right of workers to form a union to protect their economic and

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