



**Contact details/further info**

Contact us for a copy of the latest Education Worker bulletin or to be put in touch with your nearest Solidarity Federation local/EWN group.

**EWN**

c/o News From Nowhere  
96 Bold Street  
Liverpool  
L1 4HY

[www.ewn.org.uk](http://www.ewn.org.uk)

[ewn@ewn.org.uk](mailto:ewn@ewn.org.uk)

**Solidarity Federation:** [www.solfed.org.uk](http://www.solfed.org.uk)

**IWA:** [www.iwa-ait.org](http://www.iwa-ait.org)



06/07

## BUILDING A REVOLUTIONARY UNION FOR EDUCATION WORKERS

An introduction to the Education Workers  
Network



protection at work being better than none at all), but as our perspective and the effectiveness of our methods draws increasing numbers of education workers into our ranks we will, in time, outgrow the need to remain members of the reformist business trade unions.

Currently we have more members who work in universities than in colleges or schools, but we hope in time to correct this - EWN is open to and welcomes interest from all workers in education, regardless of sector or job.

At this point we have to be realistic that we cannot act in exactly the same way as a fully-fledged union. At the same time however, we recognise that if we don't start somewhere we'll never create the type of education union that we need to turn the tide of events in favour of education workers, and of the working class generally.

### **What's special about education workers?**

Nothing. Workers in all sectors of capitalist society are exploited and demoralised by wage slavery.

EWN is an industrial network of the Solidarity Federation, the British section of the anarcho-syndicalist International Workers Association (IWA), established in 1922. You join an industrial network of the Solidarity Federation by joining your nearest SolFed local. Although anarcho-syndicalism is not well known in this country, it does have historical echoes in

a profit, fee-paying and the passing of exams by increasing numbers of students. Schools are becoming semi-privatised, with big business and religious organisations handed control of finance and curriculum via "academy" status. College employees are demoralised by low pay and failure to implement national pay agreements, bad management, increasing workloads, cuts in adult education and an overly-vocational emphasis/government policy to turn FE Colleges into a form of "tertiary modern" education.

That the education unions have proved themselves powerless to stop this process is no surprise. They have no alternative to education under capitalism. They are divided into petty factions which frustrate unity and co-ordinated action. They are linked to the very Labour Party that encourages management to attack our wages and conditions, and that reinforces the "production line" notion of education at all levels.

### **IT worker's view**

"I am on a fixed term contract and just got offered my 7<sup>th</sup> extension, of two months. At our university practically all new staff start on temporary contracts, and temporary contracts are chained one after another for long periods of time. The end of fixed term contracts are treated as natural occurrences, as opposed to dismissals, as they should be. UCU's strategy is of course like any business union's: focusing on industrial tribunals, grievance procedures and negotiating with the management."

culture is based on problems being taken to the branch secretary where they are dealt within a quasi legal framework. Broader negotiations are always carried out by either the fulltimer, branch secretary or assistant branch secretary, or all three, with very little accountability.”

**We can fight back together by organising in the Education Workers Network.**

unfilled and unadvertised for months at a time, but there’s always money for management posts (regardless of how little they actually do).”

#### Academic’s view

“The move to vocationalism in universities means constant pushes to develop new courses etc in line with “employers needs”. Not only does this alter the nature of education to that of training and lead to a narrowing of what will be taught (ie more job related specifics and less generalist, overall interpretations), meaning much less chance to introduce radical ideas and more conformity to Blairite (or whoever the government is at the time and the ideology it represents) policy directed practice; it also means we are in more meetings to discuss all this and there is far more pressure to conform. The introduction of PDPs etc to support the above is a nightmare that I have so far refused to have anything to do with. But the pressure to conform is very great, "It's only this form or that", "the students only have to do this" and so on. But when you stand back and look at the differences from just a few years ago, forms, meetings and other shite (as well as costs to students) have proliferated faster than rabbits.

Teaching and prep seems to be something we do as a side issue, ie when we have a few minutes. Teaching suffers and with it the student experience of HE.

Then there are the idiotic schemes designed to make the vast army of new managers look important. We