

About the conference

In 2002 an employment tribunal in Liverpool announced that 86 workers dismissed by their former employer, Friction Dynamics Ltd, a car parts manufacturer in North Wales, had won their claims for unfair dismissal. The workers had been sacked for taking strike action in defence of their terms and conditions of employment and the recognition of their union, TGWU.

But the tribunal victory was next to worthless. Their jobs were lost. No reinstatement orders were issued because the employer went into administration. Despite the company reconvening some months later as Dynamex Friction, the insolvency of the original employer meant that the workers only recovered their basic awards, money that came from the taxpayer not from the employer. Nevertheless, the workers remained on strike and on picket duty for two and a half years – making the strike the UK's longest running workplace dispute.

In this, the 10th anniversary year of the tribunal decision, we meet to consider the implications of the dispute; the lessons to be learned for today and how and in what ways the law has changed, if at all, over the past 10 years. Friction Dynamics exposed the weaknesses in the UK's framework of labour law including the doctrine of 'protected industrial action', the inadequacy of unfair dismissal remedies, the restrictions on solidarity action and the enormous loopholes in the protections offered by the TUPE Regulations.

At this event some of the key individuals involved in the dispute, including the lawyers who represented the workers at tribunal, will come together to examine the dispute and discuss how the law might be changed to better protect workers in the future.

Programme

- 1.30 Registration
- 1.50 Introduction from Chair, *Carolyn Jones*
- 2.00 The history and facts of the dispute
Bryan Davies
- 2.30 Supporting the grass roots: the role of the local trade union
Gerald Parry, Unite the Union
- 3.00 Legal implications past and present
John Hendy QC
- 3.30 Questions and discussion
- 4.00 CLOSE