



*Celebrating  
125 Years of Service*



# *1891 - 2016*

## *125 Years Strong*

Usdaw can celebrate its 125th anniversary with pride – stronger, bigger and arguably more influential now than at any time in its history. Usdaw is the modern face of a professionally run and well-managed trade union. Without doubt it is organisationally responsive enough to face any challenges the modern world can throw at us.

This is not the case for many of our fellow unions. Some have disappeared altogether often merged into super-unions a trend evident especially in the last 25 years. But the merger option was never on Usdaw's agenda. We remain independent, financially strong and with a dedicated small army of around 10,000 reps supported by a hard-working team of officials and staff.

Our success is neither accidental, nor lucky, but based on a realisation that as the millennium arrived we had to re-evaluate our strategy, our methods and our ways of working. Brave decisions were made, important initiatives were taken resulting in Usdaw's working methods being revolutionised particularly during the last 10 years. It has not been easy but it has paid off and Usdaw can now look forward to celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2041. Of course a new generation, educated and trained by the Union, will lead us to that milestone.

The sheer quantity of change, some of it completely unforeseen such as the rise of the internet and the digital revolution, cannot be completely recorded in this book, rather a flavour of some of the big issues, the campaigns, the struggles, the highs – and yes the lows we have had to endure – are chronicled here.

The last 25 years, like the first 100 years, has seen Usdaw continue to strive to improve workers' lives and win for our members. Our mission is far from complete; too many workers are low paid, too many workers are injured at work, and too many workers endure insecurity at work. However, despite all of these challenges, without Usdaw we know our members would be in a far more difficult situation.

So let's reflect positively on the achievements of both past and present activists and officials. Let's look forward with a confidence borne out of 125 years of service and expertise. Our campaign for justice, equality and fairness continues apace for everyone associated with the Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers.



JOHN HANNETT (General Secretary)





IMPERIAL FEDERATION—MAP OF THE WORLD SHOWING THE EXTENT OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN 1886.  
STATISTICAL INFORMATION FURNISHED BY CAPTAIN J. C. R. COLMAN, R.F. (RETIRED), & BY THE BRITISH TERRITORIES GOVERNMENT.



# Setting the Scene



*In 1887 the British Empire reigned supreme and Britain basked in the euphoria of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. But all the euphoria could not conceal the poverty and insecurity of the working classes.*

This series of events towards the end of the 19th century highlight the age in which the Union's pioneers lived.

- 1885** - General Gordon killed taking Khartoum.
  - First inoculation against rabies.
- 1886** - Statue of Liberty unveiled.
- 1888** - Jack the Ripper murdered six women in London.
- 1889** - Eiffel Tower completed.
  - Great London Dock Strike.
- 1890** - Van Gogh shot himself dead.
  - Rubber gloves first used in surgery.
  - Opening of the first underground railway in London.
  - Moving picture films shown in New York.
- 1891** - Conan Doyle published 'Adventures of Sherlock Holmes'.
  - Factory Act forbade children under 11 to work in factories.
- 1893** - Henry Ford designed his first gasoline buggy.
- 1894** - Blackpool Tower opened.
- 1896** - First Olympic Games.
  - Locomotives Act brought the repeal of 'Red Flag Restriction' - maximum speed limit raised to 14 mph.
- 1897** - Trained nurses only to be employed in hospitals.
  - Employers Liability Act: Responsibility for injuries to and compensation of employees injured at work.

The 1880s and 1890s were a period of rapid economic and social change in Great Britain. Among these changes, the world-wide spread of steamships and railways brought a flood of cheap imports to Britain. Also the output of all types of mass produced consumer goods increased rapidly and found a ready market, particularly among the affluent middle classes.

These developments were to transform the retailing trades. Big department stores and multiple chain stores began to replace the traditional family draper or grocer.

The wages, hours and working conditions of those employed in these establishments were among the worst experienced by the employed population. Unemployment, sickness and old age, not yet regularly provided for by the State, still held terror for the worker.

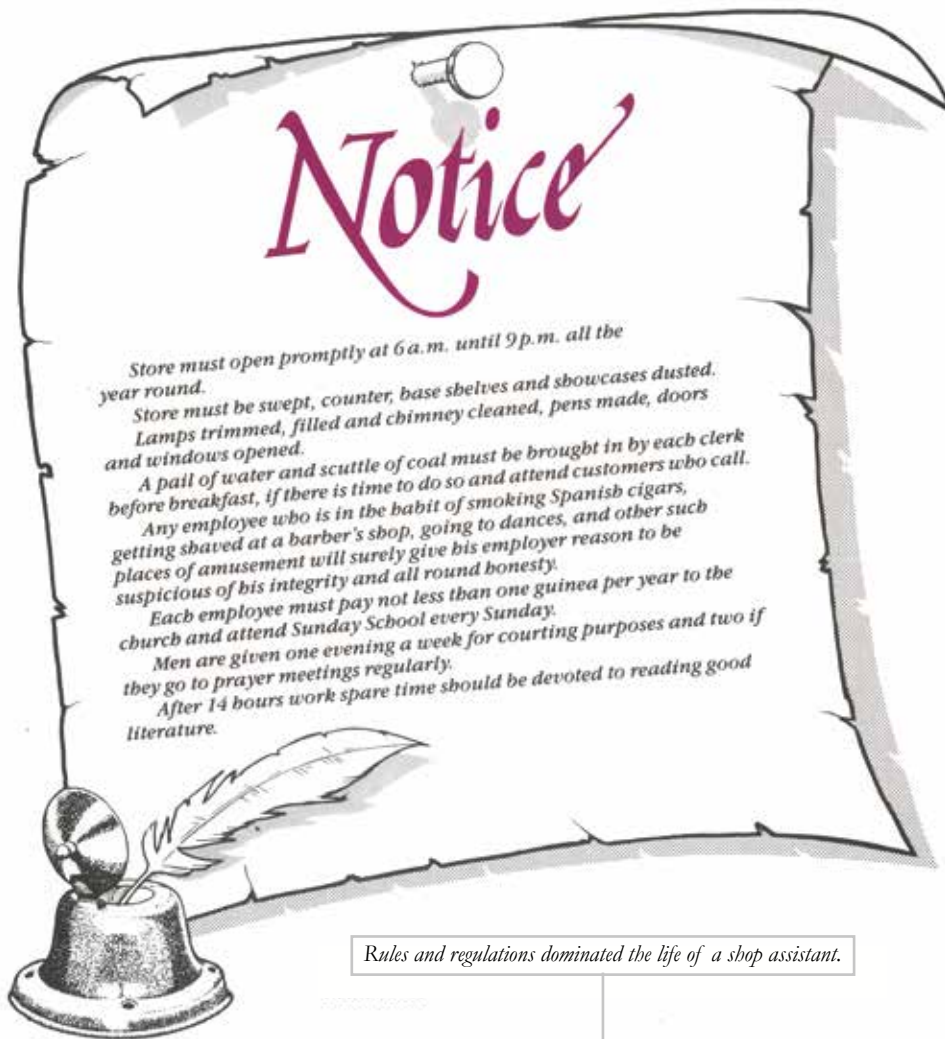
# The Birth of a Union



*The shops and high streets in the 1890s bear little resemblance to those of today.*

*The representatives of 11 shop assistants' organisations met in 1891 to form the National Union of Shop Assistants. The Union's first General Secretary, William Johnson, is pictured on the front row, second from the left.*





# Notice

Store must open promptly at 6 a.m. until 9 p.m. all the year round.  
Store must be swept, counter, base shelves and showcases dusted.  
Lamps trimmed, filled and chimney cleaned, pens made, doors and windows opened.  
A pail of water and scuttle of coal must be brought in by each clerk before breakfast, if there is time to do so and attend customers who call.  
Any employee who is in the habit of smoking Spanish cigars, getting shaved at a barber's shop, going to dances, and other such places of amusement will surely give his employer reason to be suspicious of his integrity and all round honesty.  
Each employee must pay not less than one guinea per year to the church and attend Sunday School every Sunday.  
Men are given one evening a week for courting purposes and two if they go to prayer meetings regularly.  
After 14 hours work spare time should be devoted to reading good literature.

*Rules and regulations dominated the life of a shop assistant.*

**I**n 1891 retailing employed 750,000 workers, many of them ruthlessly exploited. Brutally long working hours for very low pay was the norm with two thirds of the workforce also subjected to the 'living-in' system.

In the 'better class' department stores a 70-hour week was standard and 80 to 90 hours a week was common in suburban shops.

In 1891 a Bill was proposed in Parliament to limit the working hours of women and children in shops to 74 hours per week and for shop assistants to have one 'half-day' per week after 4 pm. The Bill was defeated!

Against this background Union activity in shops began, and rapidly spread. Shop assistants' meetings had to be held after closing time, often commencing at 10 pm and finishing at midnight – in time for last drinks.

On 18th March 1891 the Manchester and District Co-operative Employees Association (MDCEA) was formed. Eleven days later but quite independently, the representatives of 11 shop assistants' organisations from cities around the country met to form the National Union of Shop Assistants.

**The Union had arrived.**



# The 1890s: Usdaw in the Making



*The joint committee of the MDCEA and the Bolton Co-operative Employees meet to discuss the merger of their organisations to form the AUCE. The first General Secretary Augustus Hewitt and first President John Dyson are pictured on the front row, third and fourth from the left.*



*NUSAW&C delegates at the 1895 Annual Delegate Meeting total 27 in number – so few compared with the hundreds that assemble today. General Secretary James Macpherson, is pictured on the front row, third from the left.*

The reasons given by shopkeepers for the dismissal of their assistants, or by assistants for giving notice, were often curious; sometimes ludicrous or grimly humorous. Generally, they throw a light on the conditions of employment in shops almost a century ago.

The following 'reasons' for dismissal have been taken from cases that passed through the NAUSAW&C central office all those years ago.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Woman (27 years of age) engaged as assistant – afterwards ordered to do housework in addition. Hours, 7 am to 11 pm. Gave notice.</li> <li>2. Dismissed. Told he had no right to look for another job while he had one.</li> <li>3. Dismissed, man, 23 years of age, for having candle in bedroom.</li> <li>4. Dismissed for carrying matches in pocket.</li> <li>5. 'Dismissed because my customer would not stay to be served after closing time.'</li> <li>6. Dismissed for charging a pennyworth of gum tablets to wrong department.</li> <li>7. Man (grocer, age 20), wages 7s. Parents left town and was obliged to go with them.</li> <li>8. Dismissed for being ill one day.</li> <li>9. Man (30 years of age) dismissed for getting married.</li> <li>10. Woman (23 years of age). 'I had to give notice on account of the food being so bad, and young ladies who had not very good characters. I did not wish to lose my good character.'</li> <li>11. Man – 'living in' – dismissed. Complained of condition of sleeping apartment, where water dripped onto bed from ceiling.</li> <li>12. Dismissed for refusing to sleep in bedroom with unclean person.</li> <li>13. Dismissed for asking for advance on 22s per week for managing butcher's shop doing £135 per week.</li> <li>14. Dismissed for going through wrong door to dinner.</li> <li>15. 'Guvnor objected to me as a prospective son-in-law.'</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. Asked for two days' leave to return home to arrange for and attend funeral and was dismissed.</li> <li>17. Dismissed for bringing a sandwich to work.</li> <li>18. Ate a plum.</li> <li>19. Caught in the act of serving a customer.</li> <li>20. 'New employers regretted to find they had engaged me without having a vacancy.'</li> <li>21. Suffering from 'guitar' of the stomach.</li> <li>22. Employer got a relative to work for less wages.</li> <li>23. Temporary 'birth'.</li> <li>24. 'Held responsible for shortage of stock while I was on holiday.'</li> <li>25. Because customer would not conform to rule of establishment and wait for receipt from the cash desk.</li> <li>26. Alleged defiance – singing in bedroom.</li> <li>27. Refused to sleep any longer on the pledge counter.</li> <li>28. 'Dismissed because I would not shout in the street.'</li> <li>29. 'For refusing to sign an agreement that would prevent me from earning my livelihood at my own trade and in my native place.'</li> <li>30. For eating a scone at teatime. The preference for this rather than bread and butter was regarded as a personal insult.</li> <li>31. For become engaged to a young lady employed by the same firm.</li> <li>32. Stock short £2.4s. Previous stock was £2.4s over.</li> <li>33. Dismissed. Employer doesn't quite know why.</li> <li>34. For doing too much work. Grocery trade.</li> </ol> |
|--|---|



hop assistants were in every way bound to their employers, often dismissed for 'misdemeanours' committed outside working hours. There was much work to do. In order to be effective the Unions realised they needed to increase their numbers.

In 1893 the National Union of Shop Assistants changed its name to the National Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks (NUSAW&C) and five years later joined forces with the United Shop Assistants Union to form the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks (NAUSAW&C).

Meanwhile, in 1895, the Manchester and District Co-operative Employees Association (MDCEA) merged with the Bolton Co-operative Employees to form the Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employees (AUCE).

On formation, the AUCE had 2,151 members and had net assets of £98.2s.2d.

The formation of the NAUSAW&C and the AUCE ensured that trade unionism in retailing was here to stay!

# The Grim Reality of 'Living-In'



*Shop assistants who 'lived-in' were subjected to deductions from wages for so-called misdemeanours and luxuries.*



*The squalid, unwelcoming dormitories shop assistants were forced to live in but could never look upon as home.*







*"He has no freedom and no responsibility. He is politically and socially a child with rations instead of rights. Treated like a child, punished like a child, washed and combed like a child ... forbidden to marry like a child ..."*

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW



The Free Englishman

*Shop assistants leapt from the top floor of this dormitory when fire broke out. One assistant died when she fell onto the signboard.*

**O**riginating from a time when the apprentice lived with the employer's family, the 'living-in' system in the retail trade became a condition of employment. In 1891, 450,000 shop assistants 'lived-in' and the employer paid them partly in cash and partly by providing board and lodging.

Premises were taken in cheap neighbourhoods or buildings were erected specially to house workers. Six to 20 young men or women often had to share a room where lives were frequently endangered in cramped and appalling conditions.

In 1912 fire destroyed Barkers department store in Kensington, London and five shop girls who lived on the premises were burnt to death.

Those who 'lived-in' were subject to all manner of abuse. Food was dreadful – bread rock hard and at least a week old, meat nearly 'walked off' the plate, rats ran across the room minutes after lights out, rooms were infested with lice, money was deducted from wages for book keeping errors and charges were made for reading matter, etc. Baths and hot water were considered a luxury and in some houses only one pint of hot water was allowed per person per week. Yet you were still expected to turn up for work spic and span.

# The Lighter Side of 'Living-In'

## WASHING DAY!



Name of Latecomer	Excuse	Remarks
Jones (Cabinets)	Unwell	No, he is not - lazy fellow.
Smith (Silks)	Illness at home	Clear him out.
Robinson (Prapery)	Relation ill	Fine excuse.
Williams (Hosiery)	Lost the train	Yes, and will lose head, too, if not careful.

At William Whiteley's drapery store a 'late list' of shop assistants was displayed each day giving the name of the offender, his department and his excuse. To this Whiteley added his own scrawled comments in red ink.

## RAT-HUNTING EXPEDITIONS.



**I**t was no laughing matter to be 'living-in'. But the words of some employers might raise a wry smile.

A shop owner sued by the local sanitary inspector for having a carcase on his premises unfit for human consumption appealed, and got off, on the grounds that the meat was not for sale – it was for the staff!

Another owner when asked 'Can you defend a system of boarding 30 young women from weekend to weekend with no bathroom?' answered 'We have never been asked for a bathroom'.

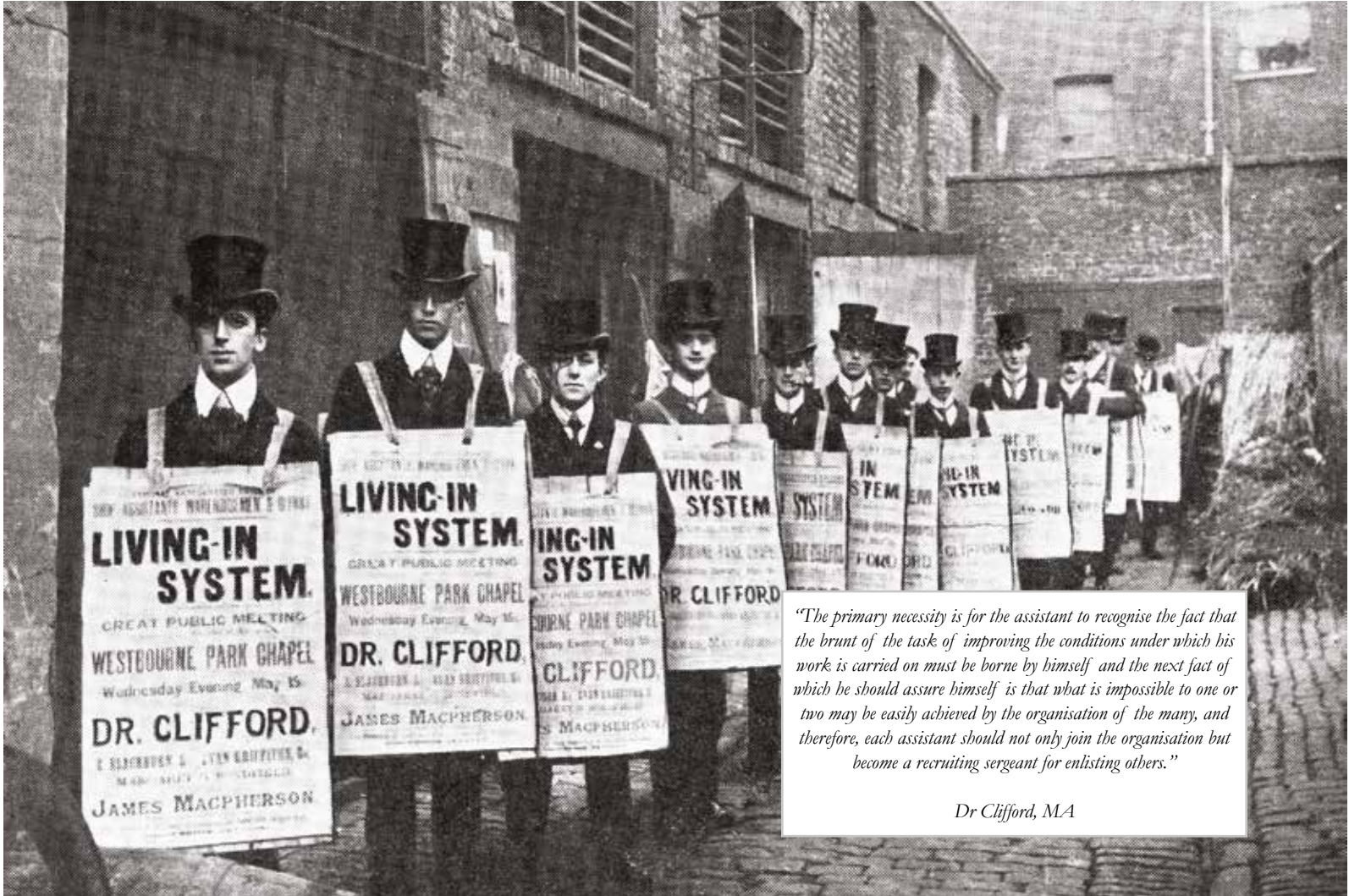
An employer said that while he had no objection to employees getting married... '...I would rather they go elsewhere and get married; we do not want people in our employ like that ... it tends to make them – well certainly not honest'.

Another admitted keeping two cows, two horses, poultry, a cat and a dog in the yard of his 'living-in' quarters. When asked if any disagreeable smell arose, the employer said 'No, not unless the wind happens to come that way'.



# The Fight Against 'Living-In'

Hundreds had to be turned away from Dr Clifford's meeting against the 'living-in' system. The fight had begun in earnest.



*"The primary necessity is for the assistant to recognise the fact that the brunt of the task of improving the conditions under which his work is carried on must be borne by himself and the next fact of which he should assure himself is that what is impossible to one or two may be easily achieved by the organisation of the many, and therefore, each assistant should not only join the organisation but become a recruiting sergeant for enlisting others."*

Dr Clifford, MA

## ANTI-LIVING-IN CAMPAIGN IN SOUTH WALES



*Kentish Town: The men working at Messrs Daniels who 'lived-out' were dismissed one by one and replaced with young men from out-of-town who would agree to 'live-in'. The Union took action and the men went on strike. The Company rescinded and yet another blow was recorded against the 'living-in' system.*

**J**une 1901 saw a demonstration against 'living-in' which caused a major sensation.

Thirteen shop assistants from William Whiteley's department store paraded with sandwich boards along Oxford Street to the West End of London. Their boards advertised a mass meeting against 'living-in' to be addressed by the great preacher Dr Clifford.

A wave of actions against 'living-in' followed. Some successfully secured the immediate ending of 'living-in' while others won improvements in conditions.

Men working at Messrs Daniels of Kentish Town were granted the right to 'live-out' in 1907. But the firm, discovering the changeover was costing them hundreds of pounds, reacted by dismissing workers who 'lived-out' one by one. The firm refused to negotiate the matter with the Union and the men went on strike. The struggle lasted for 16 weeks until Messrs Daniels signed an agreement to make the firm a 'living-out' establishment.

In 1914, 400,000 workers still 'lived-in'. One of the main arguments put forward was that 'living-in' protected women and discouraged immorality.

'Living-in' lingered on into the 1920s when, after a long campaign, most workers had won the right to choose between taking board and being paid a full wage.



# The Battle for Early Closing

This demonstration took place in Trafalgar Square in 1902 to demand a 60 hour week. The attendance was estimated between 500 and 1,000 and it was a great success.

The theme for all the speeches that day were taken from the inscription on the Union banner: 'He who would be free, himself must strike the blow.'



The meeting was addressed by John Turner, Margaret Bondfield and PC Hoffman amongst others.

Miss Bondfield remarked that: "Ten years ago shop assistants would have been afraid to gather in any number at a public demonstration. We are certainly getting bolder..."

The fight for early closing gathered momentum and, in 1903, the great Liberal MP, Sir Charles Dilke, with the full support of the shop unions, introduced a Bill of Shop Law to reform working conditions. The Bill proposed compulsory 8 pm closing with one half-day holiday per week starting no later than 12 noon. Also and, most contentious, the Bill proposed a maximum 60 hour working week for shop assistants. The Bill was bitterly opposed and every obstacle placed in its path in both the House of Lords and House of Commons.

The Liberal Government of the day had Winston Churchill as Home Secretary and it was he who personally moved deletion of the 60 hour working week clause. Also removed was compulsory 8 pm closing.

Labour MPs were so incensed that they prepared to vote against the entire Bill but were urged not to by the shop unions as it still contained compulsory one half-day closing per week. The mangled Bill was subsequently passed but compulsory half-day closing was not introduced until 1912.

"I can assure you of my warm sympathy with the grocers' assistants. It seems to me that the only improvement in the conditions of their work must come from co-operation with a view to reduction of hours."

Dr Conan Doyle (1902)

“For two years – the most miserable years of my life – I was behind the counter of a draper’s shop. I am in favour of compulsory early closing because it is, I am convinced, absolutely impossible to make the shopping class understand what a serious matter late shopping is.”

H.G. Wells (1902)



This poem appeared in the Daily Express following evidence given to a House of Lords Committee examining early closing.

### *The Cry of the Shopman*

The shutters are down at eight,  
And till midnight is drawing nigh  
I am here at the counter to serve and wait  
On those who may come to buy.  
And plodding from day to day  
Too heavy of heart to rebel,  
I feel I have given my soul away  
And my life – 'tis a shoddy sell!

When the summer eves are sweet,  
And the country ways are fair  
It would take the weariness out of my feet  
To be going a-roaming there.  
But at eve, when others are free  
I am doomed at my post to stop,  
And the country is only a dream to me  
A dream in the flare of the shop!

At the close of each long day's rounds  
No time to live can I take,  
And my children's voices have alien sounds  
So seldom do I see them awake.  
In slumbers my Sundays pass –  
For I am thankful at rest to be –  
Too tired to go wandering over the grass  
That will someday cover me.

My duty I do not shirk  
But so easily I were blest!  
Or is it that some have no leisure for work  
As I have none for rest?  
'Tis little for them to give  
And yet it were much to deny –  
For all I ask is the time to live,  
As well as the time to die.

In addition to low pay and 'living-in', the issue of greatest concern to shop assistants was that of shop opening hours.

Unregulated competition drove traders to open their shops for as many hours as possible. It was quite common for shop assistants to work from 8 am to 10 pm on Monday to Thursday, from 8 am to 11 pm on Friday and from 8 am to midnight on Saturday. Early closing meant at 5 pm on one of the days from Monday to Thursday.

Shop assistants had long understood that the only real solution for their excessive working hours lay in the reduction of shop opening times.

For many years they had supported various campaigns led by MPs, Church leaders and the Early Closing Association, largely aimed at securing the voluntary agreement of traders to restrict opening hours.

Along with the development of trade union organisation among shop assistants, grew an understanding that traders should be compelled, by law, to limit opening hours and that this would only be achieved through their own collective action.

In the early 1900s demonstrations organised by the NAUSA&C for shop assistants, fed up with their long hours and exploitation, took place in London.



# A Period of Unrest



*The J & A Ferguson store was picketed, men paraded the streets with posters and hand-bills were distributed in their thousands. Public sympathy was on the side of the strikers and trade dropped dramatically. After five weeks the firm agreed to the Union's demands and the employees were granted three nights' closing at 6.00 pm and other improvements.*

*One of the most lengthy strikes against a Co-op Society was at Coalburn, Lanarkshire in 1914. Called after two employees were sacked, 60 members came out on strike. A bitter and sometimes violent dispute ensued after the Society advertised for new staff and brought in black-leg labour.*





The period running up to the First World War was one of unparalleled industrial unrest in Britain. Over these years actions by the NAUSAW&C secured Union agreements with hundreds of companies throughout the country.

In 1908, staff at grocers J & A Ferguson in Glasgow objected to working 79 hours a week – and sometimes over 100 hours during busy periods. This meant shop assistants could be working without food from midday until 9 pm or later.

The employers refused to listen and, after learning that four of their number were to be dismissed, 14 of the 17 staff went on strike.

Not all disputes were with private employers, however. The first-ever strike of Co-op employees took place in 1912 at the CWS flour mill in Avonmouth while, 12 months later at Lincoln, retail Co-op workers struck for the first time.

The Society's workers were demanding the minimum Union rate of pay, but met with strong resistance from Lincoln Co-op's management committee. Because of AUCE agitation they had increased wages – but only by about half of the required amount.

The outbreak of World War I effectively ended the upsurge of unrest and the growth of trade unionism was temporarily checked.

*In Lincoln feelings ran high and notice of a strike was given. Despite intimidation more than 200 members withdrew their labour and the Society's shops and bakery were picketed. Because of strong local support the strike only lasted three days and ended with Lincoln Co-op agreeing to pay the full rate from the following January.*



# World War I



*Men go to war in 1914.*



*Women take over in the shops.*

The First World War had a profound effect on the retail industry and its workers. Distribution was deemed a non-essential occupation and, by 1915, 430,000 young men had volunteered to join the armed forces, many never to return. Sixty per cent of AUCE members – 25,297 – joined up and 2,103 are recorded as having lost their lives.

Unlike today, it was considered that women were incapable of replacing the men and there were fears that the civilian food supply would break down if stripped of its experienced workers. This was soon proved to be untrue.

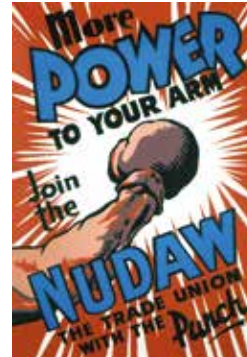
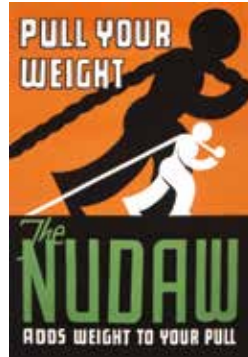
Women entered the retail industry in their thousands. Ellen Wilkinson – who later became MP for Jarrow – was appointed the AUCE's first woman organiser to look after their interests and, by the end of the war, female membership of the AUCE had risen from about 7,000 to over 36,000.

The Union fought for equal pay for women who replaced men, and won it in a large number of Co-operative Societies.

In 1918 women did get a reward of sorts for their efforts. The vote if over 30 – and the sack from their jobs when the men returned from the front!



# The Post War Boom



*The formation of NUDAW following the merger of the AUCE and the Warehouse Workers Union led to a boom in membership as the new Union recruited actively throughout the distributive trades.*

*Homeward bound and grim faced, Mr John Lewis, head of the famous London drapery firm of the same name, was determined not to give way to the 400 shop assistants who went on strike in 1920.*

*The restricted 'living-in' conditions, the insecure employment, the poor wages, and Mr Lewis's refusal to recognise the Union or relax his rod of iron control on his 600 employees, forced the shop assistants to take matters into their own hands.*

*Miss Hilda Canham, who led the girl strikers said: 'We are living in a different age than that of five years ago ... not only must we be paid more but we must be allowed to do what we like with our leisure time. Wage earners are not slaves now, they are human beings who have some rights and a claim to consideration. The Union is our protection. Mr Lewis has his solicitors – we must have our Union.'*



**A**fter the war the Trade Union Movement grew rapidly. In 1915 the NAUSAW&C had agreements with 472 companies. By 1920 they had 1,250. The membership more than doubled during that period to 86,009.

In London, major strikes took place at John Lewis and the Army and Navy Stores and in February 1920 following a mass meeting, 'house committees' were elected for every large store in the West End of London.

Attempts to amalgamate with the AUCE floundered on differences over which groups of workers they should organise.

The NAUSAW&C wanted only distributive workers to be members, whereas the AUCE organised both distributive workers in the Co-operative Societies and the production workers employed by the CWS. The latter were employed in a wide variety of industries, including flour milling, jam and confectionery production and boot and shoe manufacturing.

After the failure of amalgamation talks with the NAUSAW&C over this issue, the AUCE decided to go one stage further and recruit workers employed outside the Co-operative Movement. In 1920, this decision was confirmed with the amalgamation of AUCE with the National Warehouse and General Workers' Union to form NUDAW – the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers.

# The Collapse of the Post War Boom



*Troops take over the distribution of goods during the General Strike.*





*Mass unemployment brought devastating poverty in its wake, forcing thousands of hungry people onto the streets.*

The recession of 1921 brought mass unemployment and unleashed a shop owners' counter attack. They denounced the minimum wage levels set by the Industrial Court 'for pricing workers out of jobs' and refused to pay the rates. Wage cuts were imposed everywhere by both private employers and the Co-operative Movement. Many were met by strike action.

Under the pressure of poor trading conditions the voluntary 6 pm closing agreement broke down and working hours increased in many shops.

Mass unemployment caused a sharp drop in Union membership which, together with the payment of unemployment benefit to so many members, almost caused NUDAW to go bankrupt.

During the General Strike of 1926 both the NAUSAW&C and NUDAW supported the miners. NUDAW was part of the 'Triple Alliance' of mining, steel and transport unions, playing a very active role.

About 10,000 of the Union's members were out during the strike – two thirds of them transport workers. Thousands were subsequently victimised because of their participation.



# The Decade of Depression



Ellen Wilkinson MP



*As the Jarrow marchers passed through Leicester, NUDAW members from the Co-op's shoe repairing plant worked through the night, without pay, to mend 112 pairs of boots. The cost of the materials was paid for by the Union and put the marchers back on their feet.*



Both NUDAW and NAUSAWE&C strongly opposed the rise of Fascism. This cartoon appeared in the journal of NUDAW in 1933.

The onset in 1930 of the severest recession the world had ever known made 20 per cent of Britain's workers unemployed.

The town of Jarrow epitomised the human misery of unemployment in the hungry thirties. Virtually a single-industry town, its life blood came from Palmer's shipyard. When the shipyard closed down the consequences were catastrophic. Nearly 80 per cent of the workforce was out of work. Malnutrition was claiming lives and the death rate from tuberculosis was double the national average.

In 1936, with NUDAW-sponsored MP Ellen Wilkinson at their head, the men of Jarrow set off to march to London. Throughout the journey the march was fed and sheltered largely by the efforts of NUDAW members and Co-operative Societies.

Ellen spoke nightly at public meetings on the journey to London and finally led the weary yet triumphant marchers into London's Parliament Square. The march roused the whole nation and pricked the conscience of the Tory Government.

Apart from the recession, another great shadow lay over the political scene of the thirties – the increasing power of Fascism across Europe and the threat of a second World War.

# World War II



*Troops embark for an 'unknown' destination in a foreign land. More than 100,000 came from the ranks of NAUSAW & C and NUDAW.*





*On the home front women keep the wheels of industry turning. Others make sure everyone gets their daily 'pinta'.*



*Food was scarce but ration books meant there was a fair share out of basic foods. It also caused extra work for Union members working in shops. Surprisingly, the nation was healthier during this period.*

**D**uring the Second World War the Union threw its weight behind Churchill's Coalition Government, co-operating to secure efficient distribution of supplies and grappling with the problems of rationing.

In 1940 when food rationing was introduced it became a headache not only for the housewife but also for the thousands of Union members serving in the shops.

As war continued, call-up hit NUDAW and the NAUSAW&C more heavily than any other union and, at one time, 100,000 retail workers were serving in the forces. Women were once again being employed in large numbers in the industry and made up some 50 per cent of the workforce. But for women to qualify for the full male rate they had to be carrying out the full range of male duties.

Shipbuilding and other industries, vital to the war effort, became classified as 'Essential Work' and workers engaged in essential work were covered by rules laying down minimum requirements for wages, conditions and welfare; and though they could not leave their jobs without Ministry of Labour permission, they could not be dismissed from them, either.

With the onset of the Battle of Britain, fire watching became part of the working routine and the Union negotiated agreements on pay and conditions for this extra duty.



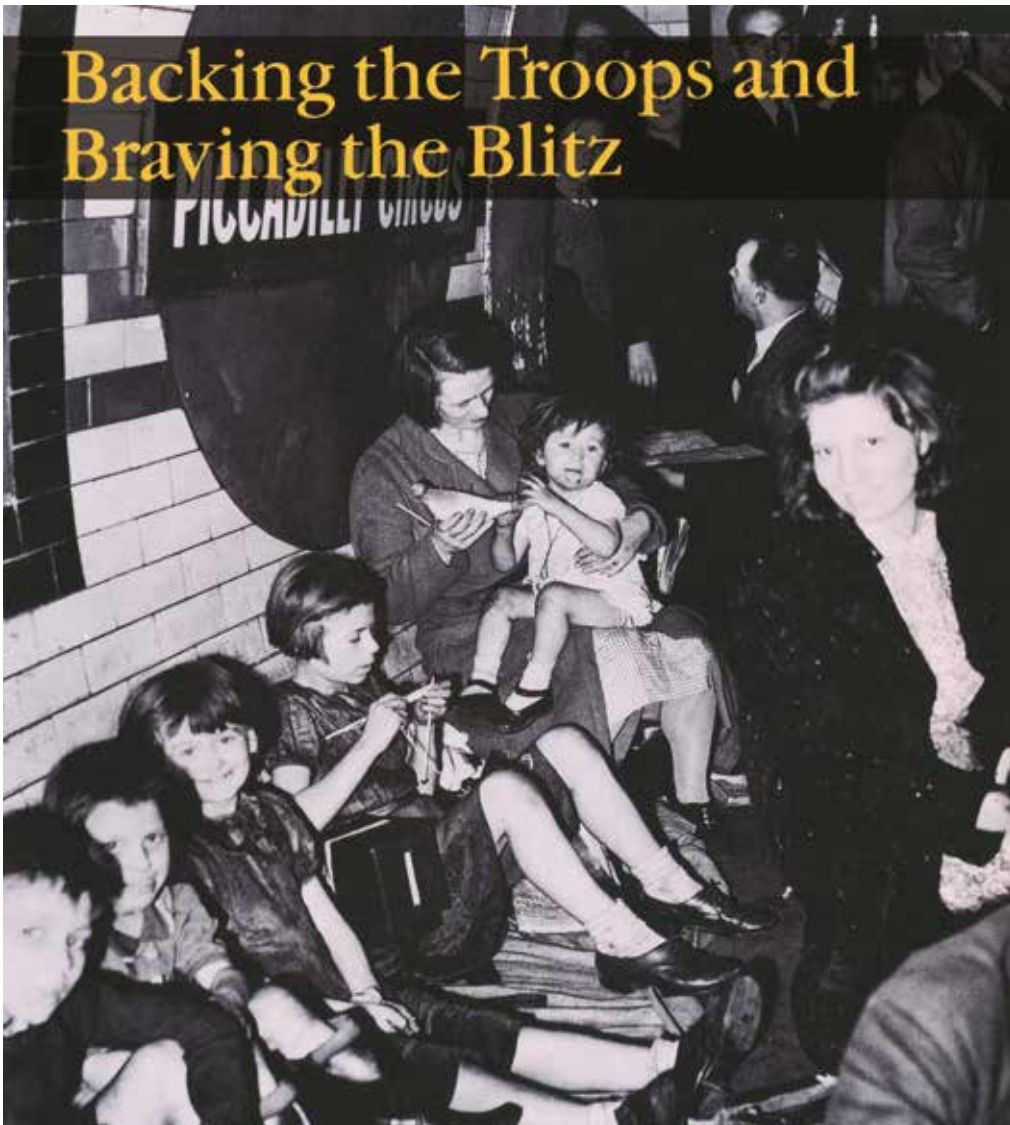


*NUDAW Industrial General Secretary Joseph Hallsworth and General President John Jagger MP, in front of one of the Union's canteens on the occasion of the inspection of the canteens by His Majesty King George VI.*



*NUDAW donated four mobile canteens, maintained by the YMCA, serving in Warwick, Oxford, Ripon and Glasgow. An additional canteen bearing the Union's name was donated solely for the use of overseas forces.*

# Backing the Troops and Braving the Blitz



*Nightly bombings forced Londoners to take shelter in the underground stations.*



ities were being bombed on a far greater scale than in the First World War – many shops were destroyed and many lives were lost. Living under the threat of nightly bombings, it was not unusual to turn up for work and, before the day's work could begin, a bomb-damaged shop had to be cleared up.

If anyone was injured while working through an air raid 'alert' then, for eight weeks, payments due under the Personal Injuries (Civilians) Scheme were made up to normal wages.

Members of the Union, male and female, were often compulsorily transferred into essential industries. A former grocer could find himself in a shipyard, or a milliner find herself in a tank factory.

During the war 2,047 NUDAW members are recorded as having lost their lives in the forces. In addition 140 members were killed in aerial attacks on Britain.

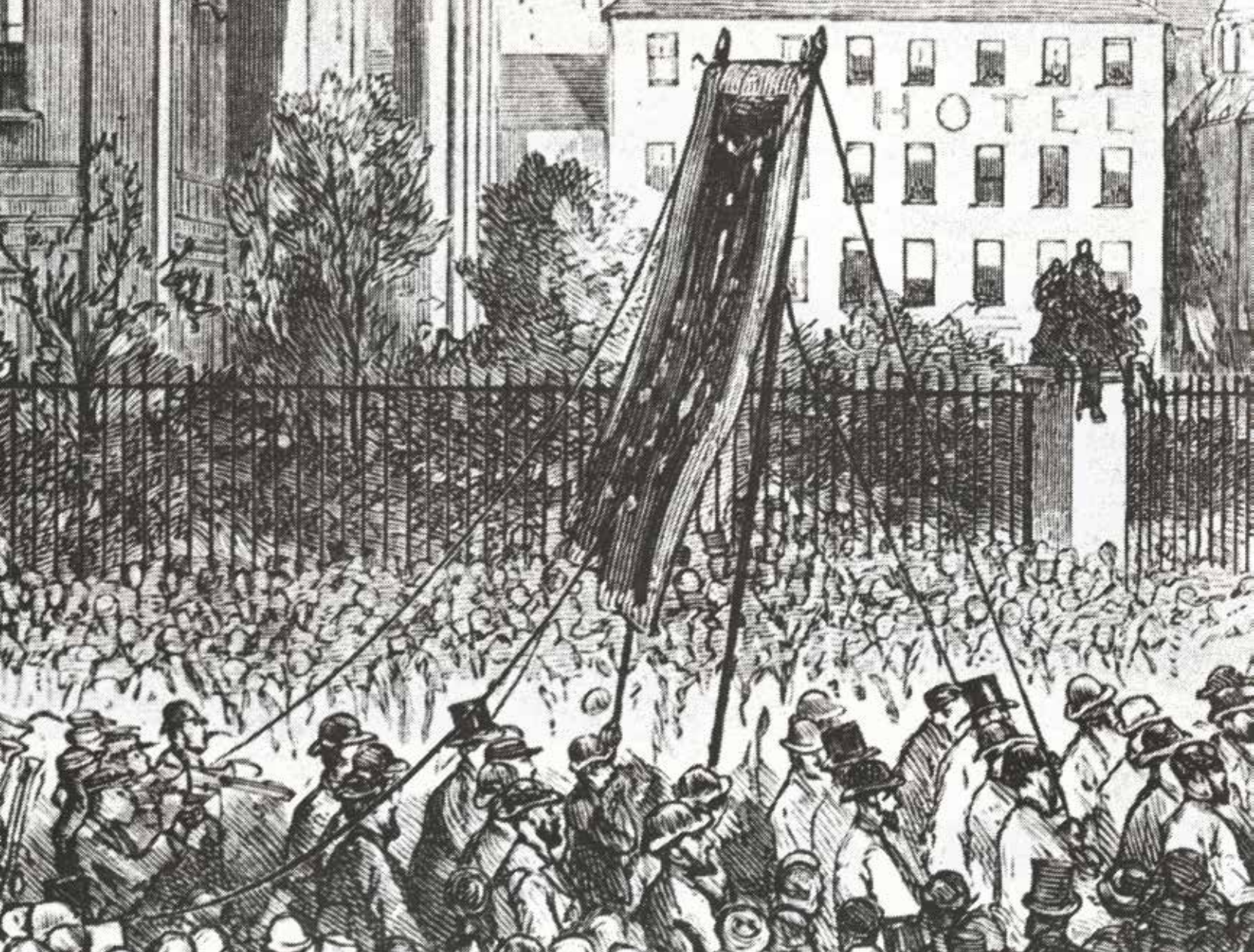
In a blitzed area people often had to queue for water from a fire hydrant and when supplies of water, food and fuel were disrupted, local committees helped in the distribution of essential supplies.

But life went on and cafes, cinemas and theatres all opened their doors unless the air raid sirens sounded.

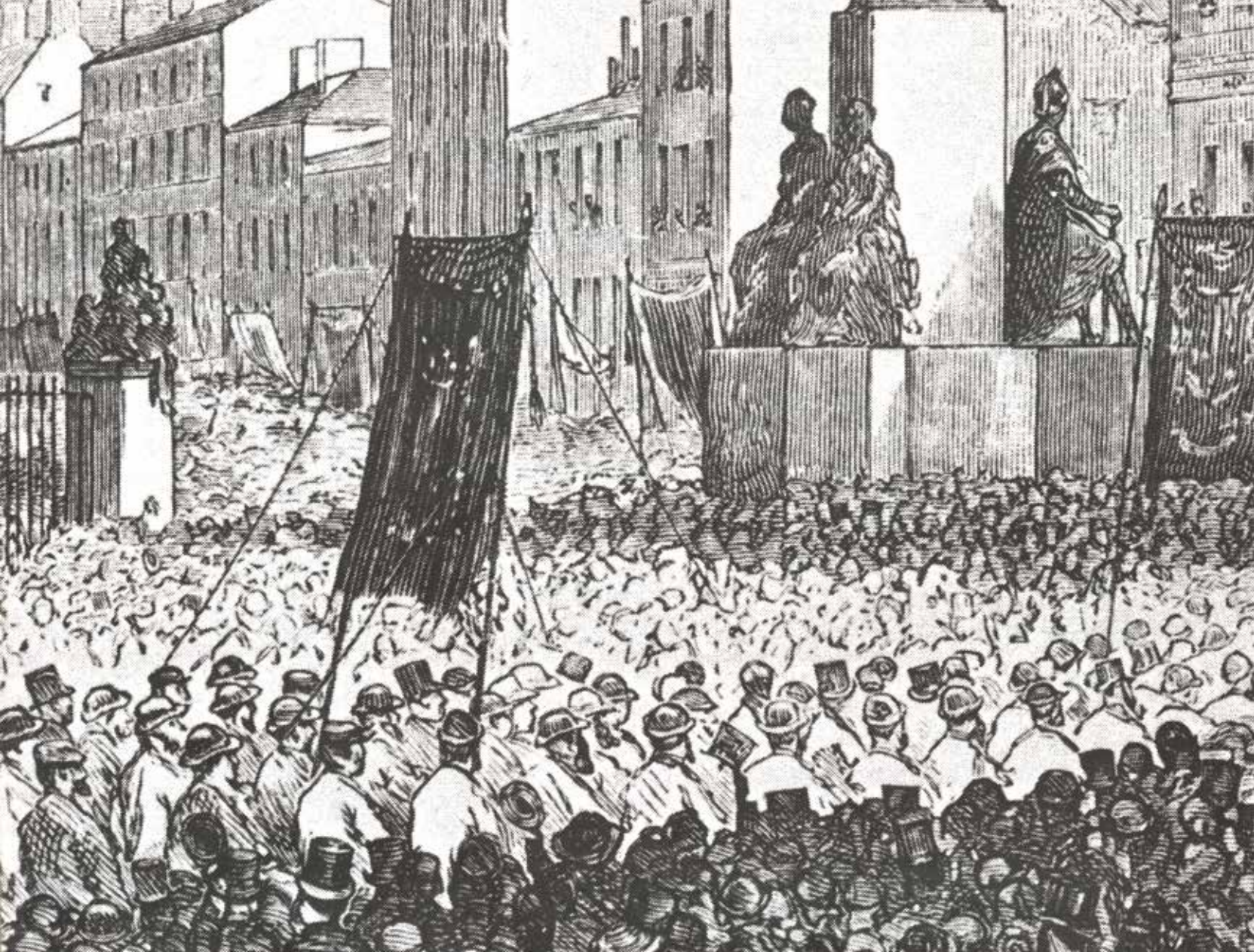
Victory in 1945 marked the end of World War II and the same year Labour won a great victory.

*125 Years Strong*

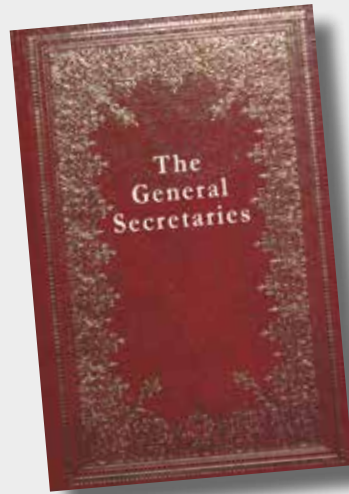








Over the years the Union has been well served by its General Secretaries whose dedication, skill and quality of leadership have built Usdaw into the strong, influential Union of today.



*Augustus Hewitt 1895-1916*

Born in Leamington Spa, he moved to Manchester and was a proof reader at the Co-operative Newspaper Society. He became General Secretary of the AUCE in 1895 – a part-time post that changed to full-time in 1899. Patient and diligent, many considered him to be the ‘father’ of the AUCE. He was also Editor of Gleanings for Members and The Co-operative Employee.



*Sir Joseph Hallsworth, MA, 1916-1949*

Born in Manchester, he became confidential clerk to Augustus Hewitt at the AUCE in 1902. An excellent administrator and negotiator he took up an appointment with the National Coal Board in 1947. AW Burrows deputised for him until 1949. A recognised authority on economics and commercial and industrial law, Joseph Hallsworth received an MA honorary degree in 1942 and was knighted in 1946.



*G Maurice Hann 1936-1946*

A Bristol man, he joined the NAUSAW&C in 1903, serving three terms on the Executive before he was 28. A member of the Union's clerical staff in 1913, he became an Organiser before being appointed National Organising Officer in 1935. Maurice Hann retired to become a member of the Industrial Court. Enthusiastic and inspirational, he combined a sound grasp of economics with notable negotiating skills.



*Sir Alan Birch 1949-1961*

Sir Alan was born in Lancashire, his first job being a clerk with Warrington Co-op. In 1936 he was appointed Organiser before becoming National Officer. At the TUC he became Chairman of the Economic Committee where his outstanding ability as an economist and knowledge of industrial matters had full rein. Knighted in 1961, he sadly died later that year at the peak of his career.



*Lord Allen 1962-1979*

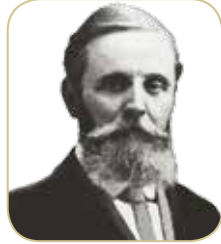
Born in Bristol, he began work at the Co-op, becoming a Union Official in 1946. Under his leadership membership almost reached 500,000. Chairman of the TUC in 1973, his reputation spread worldwide through his Presidency of FIET. Awarded the CBE in 1967 and made a Life Peer in 1974, becoming Lord Allen of Fallowfield after the Manchester district where the Union's Central Office is located.





*William Johnson 1891-1894*

A Yorkshireman by birth, he spent a few years in America before entering the drapery trade. Elected at the 1891 Birmingham Conference that founded NUSA, he was the first General Secretary, resigned in 1894 and was elected General Treasurer and later President. He was the first shop assistant to attend the TUC as a delegate.



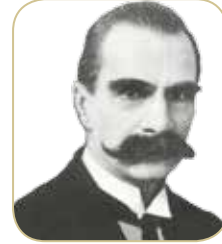
*James Macpherson 1894-1912*

Served his apprenticeship as a draper in Glasgow before moving to London. There he helped form the East London Shop Assistants' Union and took a prominent part in the 1891 Birmingham Conference. From 1892 he held every office in the Union, including President and Treasurer. Under his leadership membership grew to 80,000 and the Union's influence became widely acknowledged.



*John Turner 1912-1924*

Born in Essex he was apprenticed to a grocer at 14. The business failed, but he demanded, and won, a rise from the new owner. A founder member and President of the United Shop Assistants' Union he became a full-time organiser when that Union merged to form the NAUSAW&C. His crusading qualities brought him to prominence in early battles of the London shop assistants.



*John R Leslie 1924-1936*

A native of Lerwick, he moved to Edinburgh to become a grocery manager and joined the NAUSAW&C after hearing a speech by John Turner. In 1903, he became Scottish Organiser and later Editor of *The Shop Assistant*. Appointed as National Organising Secretary in 1918, was a pioneer in fighting for a national minimum wage. Both resolute and determined he was elected Labour MP for Sedgefield in 1935.



*William HP Whitley 1979-1986*

A native of Tyneside he moved to Manchester on becoming a National Officer in 1966. As General Secretary he was in the forefront of Usdaw's 'Save the Doorstep Pinta' campaign. He served on the TUC General Council, TUC/Labour Party Liaison Committee and became President of EURO-FIET. Recognition of his Union service came in 1986 when he was awarded an OBE.



*Lord Garfield Davies 1986-1997*

Garfield Davies joined the Union's staff as an Area Organiser in 1969. He was appointed a National Officer in 1978. He was elected General Secretary in 1985 taking up his position the following January. He was awarded the CBE in 1996 for services to industrial relations and later made a life peer entering the House of Lords in 1997 as Lord Davies of Coity.



*Sir William 'Bill' Connor 1997-2004*

Bill Connor succeeded Garfield Davies in 1997 and would lead the Union until 2004, completing 33 years as an official. He was knighted in the 2003 Queen's New Year's honours list for services to industrial relations. From 1999-2004 he was vice president of the Union Network International. A lifelong Labour Party member he had led Skelmersdale Council in the early '70s and went on to serve on the Labour Party's National Executive from 1990-1997.

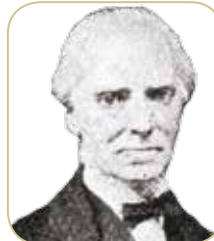
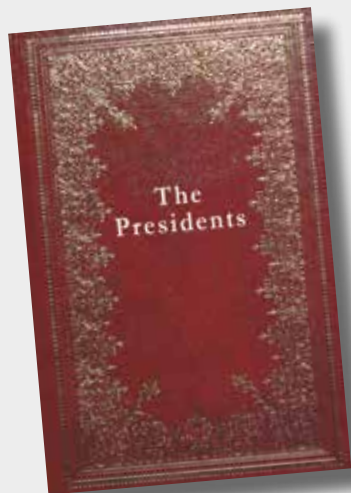


*John Hannett 2004-present*

John Hannett took over from Sir Bill Connor in 2004. John was previously the Deputy General Secretary from 1997-2004. Prior to that he had been a National Officer since 1990 after joining the Union's organising staff in 1985. Since 2007 he has been a member of the Government's Low Pay commission. He is also President of Union Network International Europa Commerce.



Presidents of the highest calibre have always played a major role in shaping the Union – chairing ADMs and Executive meetings with fairness and a firm hand, never losing sight of the democratic principles on which the Union was built.



**James Dyson** was the first President of the Amalgamated Union of the Co-operative Employees and was for many years manager of a productive society – the Working Hatters' Co-operative Association. He was President from 1895 until 1897 when he was succeeded by Thomas Howe.



**Thomas Howe**, AUCE General President from 1897, died in office in 1915. The son of a Durham miner, he was apprenticed to a firm of tailors at the age of 12, eventually becoming a manager of the Pelaw CWS clothing factory. He learned the art of public speaking as a Methodist lay preacher and possessed a genuine sympathy for the lower-paid, coupled with a great faith in the Co-operative Movement.



**Rodney Hanes** was President of Usdaw from 1965 to 1967. Born and brought up in Lancashire, he worked for the Eccles Co-op before becoming an Area Organiser in London. In 1960 he married Edna Falkingham who, for many years, was the only woman on the Executive. As Area Organiser responsible for Royal Arsenal Co-op and as President, he was known and respected as a tireless worker on behalf of others.



**Dick Seabrook** was elected President in February 1965 to fill the remainder of Walter Padley's term of office. Although defeated in April 1965 he was re-elected in 1967 and held office for six years. A former boot and shoe repairer with Chelmsford Co-op, he became a NUDAW Area Organiser in 1937, moving to Norwich ten years later on Usdaw's formation. The city honoured him in 1971 when they elected him Lord Mayor.



**Jim D Hughes** was the Union's Chief Organising Officer at the time he defeated Dick Seabrook in the 1973 election for the Presidency. He held office until 1977 – a short while after he retired from Union service. Joining Usdaw as an Organiser in 1949 he rose through the ranks to become a National Officer in 1962 and the Union's Chief Organising Officer in 1970. The membership was 400,000 strong when he retired.



**Robert Bell Padley**, a native of Lincolnshire, acted as AUCE General President in 1915 on the death of Thomas Howe and was elected to the post officially later that year. He remained in office until 1919. Between 1901 and 1915 he held the offices of Treasurer, President and Secretary of the Yorkshire District Council but, when the job of District Secretary became full-time, John Jagger took his place.



**John Jagger**, AUCE/NUDAW General President from 1919 to 1942 held office longer than any other incumbent. He was an outstanding figure at Annual Delegate Meetings, both as a delegate and as General President. He died in a road accident while carrying out his duties as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Herbert Morrison. A 'Jagger Memorial Fund' of £1,000 was set up by the Union to develop Trade Unionism in the Colonies.



**Percy Cottrell** became President of Usdaw at its inception in 1947, holding office for just over 12 months until his death in 1948. He had previously taken over as NUDAW's President in 1942. His working life, from the age of 10 was spent with Delph Co-operative Society. A dedicated Socialist, he gained a diploma in economics and political science at Ruskin College through a TUC scholarship.



**Walter Padley**, Usdaw's President for 16 years, took office in 1948 at the age of 31. A former AUCE member he worked for Chipping Norton Co-op before becoming the Usdaw-sponsored MP for Ogmore in 1950 – a seat he held for almost 30 years. He gave up the Presidency in 1964 when he was appointed Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. His special interests were world peace and international affairs.



**Syd Tierney's** Presidency started in 1977 and ended at the 1991 ADM. A former milkman, he gained a scholarship to Plater College, went on to become an Usdaw Organiser and, when elected President, was the Union-sponsored Labour MP for Birmingham Yardley. On losing his seat in 1979, he resumed employment with the Union, becoming the National Officer responsible for the Insurance Section. He was a member of the Labour Party NEC.



**Audrey Wise** was the first woman to be elected Usdaw President in 1991 and was re-elected in 1994, serving six years as President. She combined her role with being Labour MP for Preston. She had been MP for Coventry South West from 1974-79, before becoming MP for Preston.



**Marge Carey** was only the second woman to be elected Usdaw President taking up the role in 1997, a position she would be re-elected to twice in 2000 and 2003. Marge Carey was awarded the MBE in the 1998 New Year's Honour List for her services to industrial relations. She was only the second woman to be appointed a Divisional Officer in 1990 in her North Western division serving until her retirement in 2001.



Current President **Jeff Broome** was first elected to the position in 2006 and has been re-elected three times since in 2009, 2012 and 2015. Jeff was first elected on to the Union's Executive Council in 1994 and was at the time a convenor at the massive Boots site in his native Nottingham. He is a strong advocate of the Union's equality agenda and chairs its National Equalities Advisory Group as well as chairing the Union's ADM and other national conferences.

# The Women's Movement



**Annie Tynan** was appointed the NAUSAW&C's first woman organiser in 1911. Surprisingly she didn't come from a retail background but had received a firm grounding in trade unionism with the Amalgamated Society of Telephone Employees. Working as a telephone operator in Manchester she had, at a very early age, become a Branch Secretary and then Executive Councillor. She learned about the NAUSAW&C when she heard John Turner speak at the TUC and followed the Union's work through the pages of *The Shop Assistant*. Her buoyant temperament and great sense of humour attracted many other women to the movement.



**Mabel Talbot** became the NAUSAW&C's President in 1920, the first woman to hold the position in the Union's history. A London dressmaker, she advocated the appointment of a woman organiser in her first conference speech in 1910. Three months later she organised a conference of 100 women which led to the formation of the London Women's Council. She represented the Union at the TUC and at the Congress of Commercial Employees at The Hague and was elected to the Executive in 1914. A tireless worker with a clear and lucid mind, she helped consolidate the position of women in the movement.



**Mary Macarthur** rebelled against the stifling boredom of her middle-class upbringing. In 1901 she attended a meeting of the NAUSAW&C in order to write a scathing article for the Tory press, but instead was overwhelmed by the plight of shop assistants and was immediately converted. She became Chair of Ayr branch that same year and in 1903 was elected onto the NAUSAW&C National Executive. She left to form the National Federation of Women Workers, becoming its General Secretary. Her early death in 1921 was a great loss. No other woman in the history of women's trade unionism made such a significant contribution.





**Margaret Bondfield**, who became assistant secretary of the NAUSAW&C around the turn of the century, brought the plight of shop assistants and the 'living-in' system to the public eye. A series of articles in the Daily Chronicle in 1898 exposed their atrocious working and living conditions. Posing as a drapery assistant and moving from store to store, Margaret Bondfield worked 'under cover' to supply the information first-hand. She later became Labour MP for Northampton and the country's first woman Cabinet Minister.



**Ellen Wilkinson** – or 'Red Ellen' as she was best known – became the AUCE's first woman organiser in 1915, setting up a special women's department to encourage women to play a more active role. She went on to become Labour MP for Middlesbrough East in 1924, sadly losing the seat in 1931. Victorious again at Jarrow in 1935, she went on to lead the men of that town on their unforgettable hunger march to London. In 1945 she became Minister of Education after Labour's landslide victory. A diminutive figure with fiery red hair, her title of 'Red Ellen' was as much for her brand of politics as it was her hair colouring.

**W**omen currently make up around 55% of Usdaw's membership. But this has not always been the case. The first known statistic of female membership was in 1898 when the AUCE recorded 127 female members. By the end of the First World War, when women had taken over 'men's jobs', that figure had risen to 36,422.

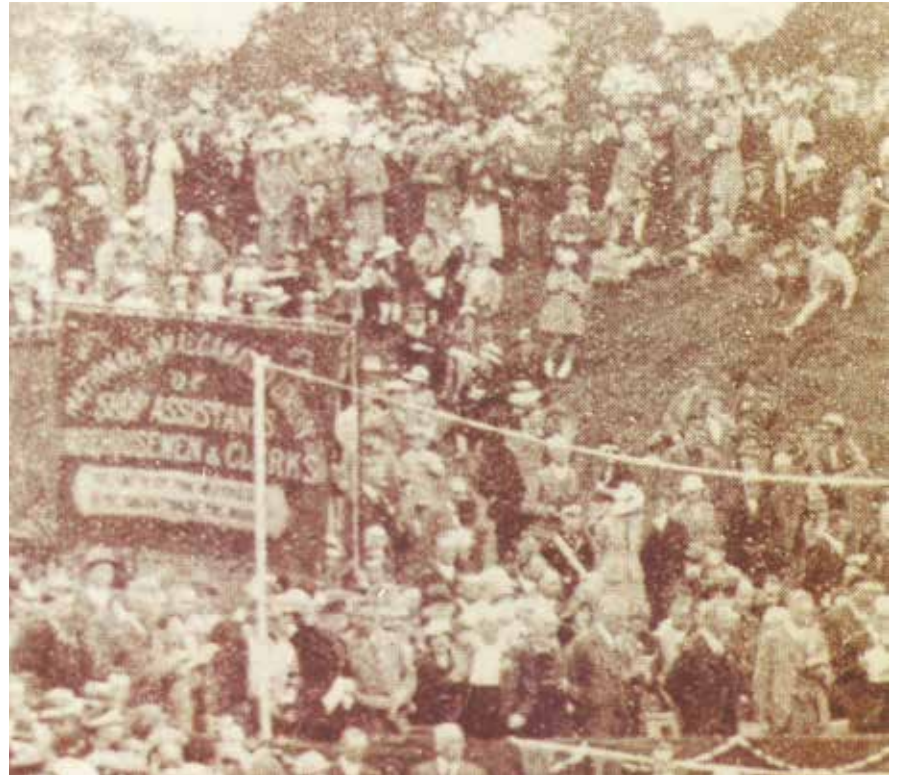
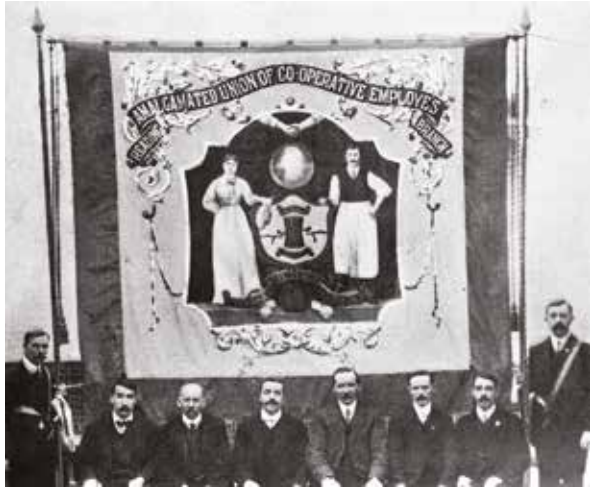
Female membership declined during the depression years of the twenties and thirties but, with the advent of the Second World War, membership again took an upward trend – a trend which has continued to the present day.

Usdaw has a proud record of supporting women's issues. It established a women's department in 1985 although this was not the first in the Union's history. Women pioneers have made their mark from the earliest days.

The Union's fight for equal pay goes back to the First World War and is an issue which has appeared more frequently than any other on the Annual Delegate Meeting agenda. This was resolved to some degree by the introduction of the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts of 1975.

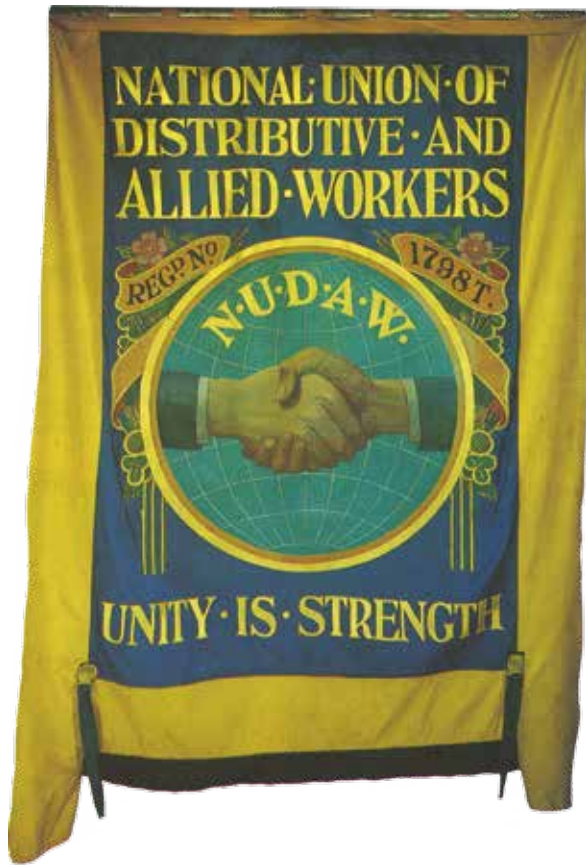
But women have only won the battle, not the war. Today, as always, Usdaw is campaigning for equal pay for work of equal value and equality of opportunity for women.

# Union Colours on Display

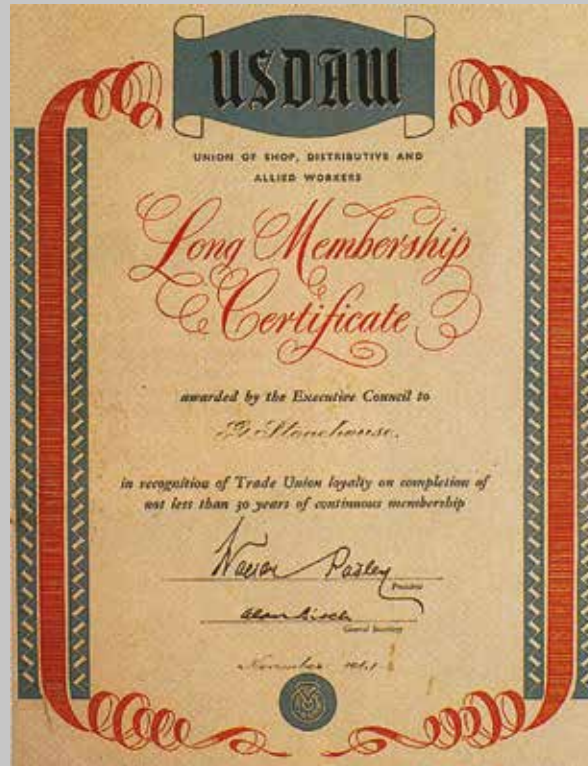


*A selection of banners, badges and long-membership awards spanning the Union's proud history.*











# The Usdaw Family Tree...

Strenuous efforts were made in the 1880s to form a trade union organisation for shop assistants. Local associations sprang up in towns and cities throughout Britain yet most only survived a few months.

The survivors formed the NUSA in 1891. However, one organisation, the United Shop Assistants' Union (USAU), that was founded in 1889, did remain independent.

In 1893 the NUSA added 'Warehousemen and Clerks' to its title in order to organise those workers. It remained the NUSAW&C until 1898 when it merged with the USAU and became the NAUSAW&C.

Coincidentally in 1891, just a few days before the NUSA was formed, MDCEA came into being. This organisation merged in 1895 with Bolton Co-operative Employees' Association to become the AUCE.

In 1917 the AUCE changed its full title to the Amalgamated Union of Co-operative and Commercial Employees and Allied Workers to recruit workers employed outside the Co-operative Movement for the first time. This was reinforced in 1920 when the AUCE merged with the National Warehouse and General Workers' Union to become NUDAW on the 1st January 1921.

Several attempts were made to amalgamate with the NAUSAW&C between the wars but all came to nothing. It was not until 1946 that agreement was finally reached and the ballot was successful. On the 1st January 1947 Usdaw came into existence.

The same year that NUDAW and the NAUSAW&C agreed to amalgamate, the Journeymen Butchers' Federation joined NUDAW. This merger brought into a single Union specialist workers in one of the most important distributive trades.

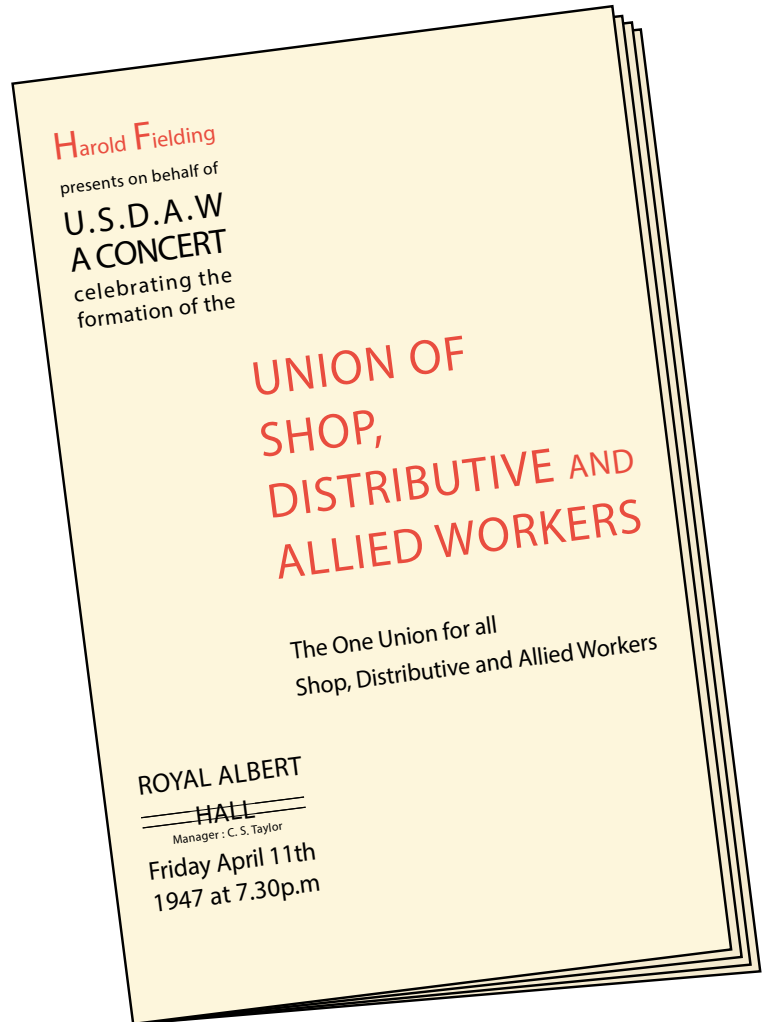


# One Union for the Distributive Trades

To mark the formation of Usdaw, and to publicise the Union's campaign for a £5 minimum wage for a 40-hour week – a series of 'campaign concerts' were held.

At London's Royal Albert Hall famous artistes of the day – including Jack Train, Carroll Gibbons, Webster Booth and Anne Ziegler – entertained the vast audience. Later, to enthusiastic applause, Sir Joseph Hallsworth promised that shopworkers would never go back to the 'days of servitude and the evils of the past'.

Manchester and Birmingham hosted similar events. At Manchester's Belle Vue, an audience of 5,600 attended while 2,000 more braved wintry conditions to attend Birmingham's town hall.







**D**iscussion on amalgamation began as far back as 1904. In both 1926 and 1937 ballots had taken place for amalgamation but had failed in recording the necessary number of votes. In addition to these two ballots, many discussions had ground to a halt over the years for one reason or another.

For more than 50 years the two Unions had lived uneasily together, often competing for the same members. NUDAW had much the greater number of Co-operative members and the NAUSA&C were stronger in the private distributive trades and, in particular, had a wide range of agreements with the multiple firms.

In 1945 the two Unions finally reached agreement on amalgamation but the ballot was delayed as NUDAW had over 80,000 members in the forces and the NAUSA&C had 30,000 scattered around the world on land and at sea. Many of these members were still abroad in 1946 when the ballot took place and strenuous efforts were made to contact them in order to secure a large and favourable vote.

The ballot was successful and on 1st January 1947 the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers was launched.

# The Self-Service Revolution



*The Co-operative Societies pioneered self-service in Britain, changing the face of shopping forever.*



*The introduction of self-service was a new innovation for customers as well as for shopworkers. An Usdaw survey in 1954 found that shopworkers generally welcomed the change.*

The self-service revolution reached Britain in the forties. This latest 'import' from America subsequently led to the growth of the large supermarket chains we know today. The number and variety of products available to an increasingly affluent public grew enormously.

The Co-operative Societies pioneered the way and, because the shops were staffed by Usdaw members, the Union had the opportunity to monitor developments. Each converted shop was visited, facts and figures checked with managers and discussions held with the staff.

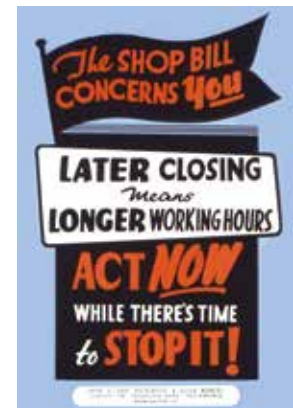
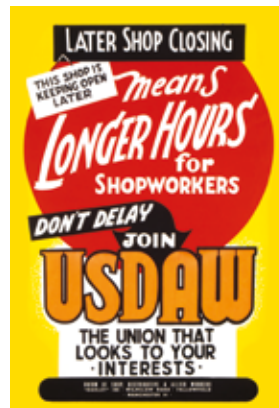
There were initial fears that self-service would lead to a loss of jobs. However, in 1950, Usdaw's Executive Council declared that with appropriate safeguards it was able to advise members to 'welcome and co-operate in the development of self-service'.

An Usdaw survey, in 1954, concluded that those who worked in self-service stores generally preferred it to traditional shop work.

Self-service spread rapidly into the private sector – though initially it was not always well received. Lord Sainsbury is said to have had a wire basket thrown at him by one irate customer, while another swore at him for expecting customers to do assistants' work! The growth of large supermarkets had a great advantage for Usdaw – they were easier to organise than small shops.

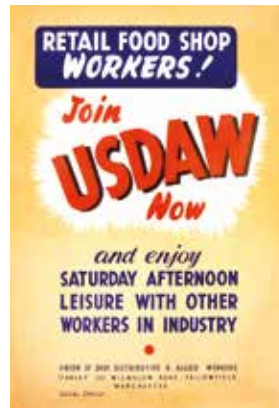
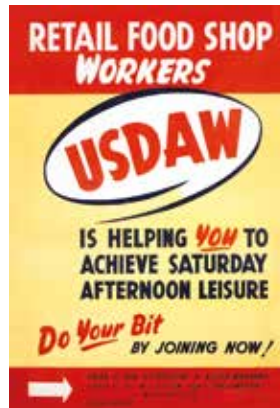
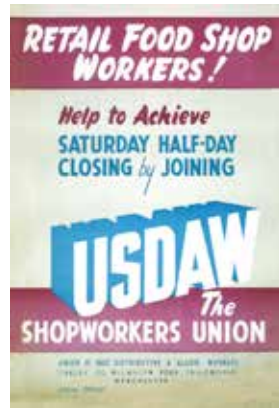


# Shopping Hours in Focus



*These five posters were produced in support of campaigns in the 1950s. Usdaw campaigned successfully for over 40 years against any changes to the 1950 Shops Act.*

The six posters below were produced in support of a national campaign for Saturday half-day closing in 1948. That year's Annual Report announced that almost half of the retail Co-operative's food shops closed on Saturday afternoons with many others working various rotas. Many private trade shops also closed. The initial success of the campaign resulted from the scarcity of goods in those post-war days. Things soon changed with the return to a free market and Saturday became a normal shopping day.



Usdaw and its predecessors have campaigned hard and long to cut the hours of shop assistants and prevent their exploitation. In 1946 the then Labour Government established a Committee of Inquiry to examine shop opening hours and conditions and make recommendations for change. Included in Usdaw's submission was compulsory 6 pm closing with one late night at 7 pm. The committee recommended 7 pm closing and 8 pm for the late night.

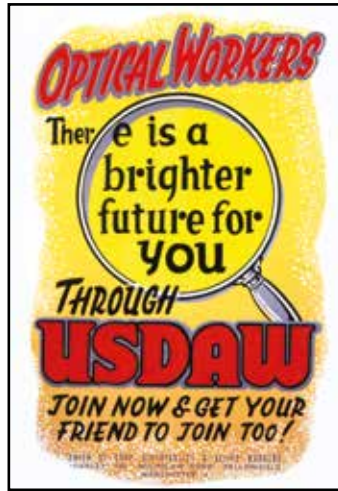
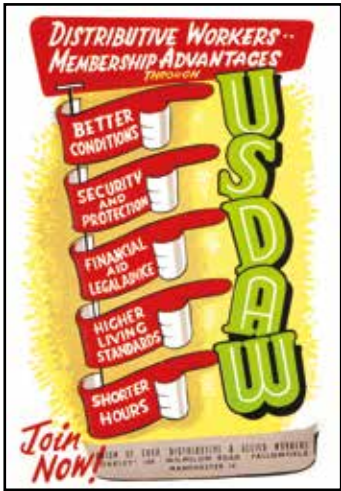
When the 1950 Shops Act was introduced neither recommendation was included. Compulsory closing remained at 8 pm with 9 pm as the one late night, with local authorities given the power to vary the orders. The Act also forbade Sunday trading in general, though there were certain exemptions.

The increasing domination of the retailing industry by supermarkets and hypermarkets has been accompanied by a relentless drive to increase shop opening hours.

From the mid-sixties onwards there were more than 20 attempts to introduce various reforms of the 1950 Shops Act, in particular to legalise Sunday trading.

Usdaw's campaigns and public opinion ensured their demise.

# The 1950s and '60s



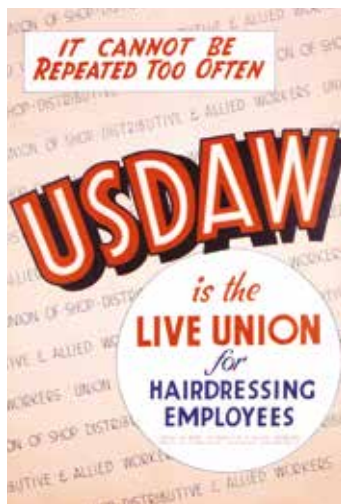
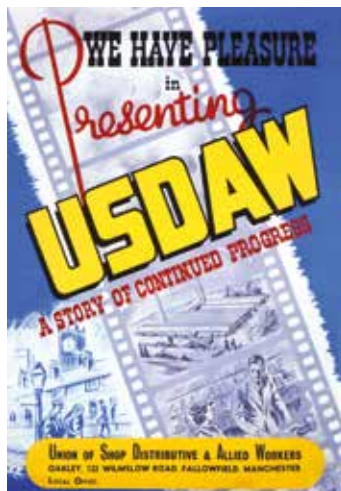
*The collection of contributions was never easy and up until the 1950s had always been undertaken voluntarily. For a variety of reasons the system began to fall down and the Union responded to this challenge by embarking on a policy of persuading employers to deduct contributions directly from wages.*

*This became known as the 'check-off' system. With the system in operation the Union was well placed to boost recruitment in both factories and the high street.*

*The 1950s and '60s saw an increase in consumer demand for all types of goods and services which led to new areas of potential growth for Usdaw.*

*Membership grew not only in the distributive trades but also in food processing and milk industries, as well as in parts of the pharmaceutical and related chemical industries.*





n the early 1960s Usdaw's objectives were to press for an adequate wage, a five-day 40-hour working week and equal pay for men and women.

The Union won its first individual agreement with the Lewis's group. It provided six days trading, with staff on a five-day rota. Agreement was also reached on five-day working for the multiple grocery trade in England and Wales in 1963, to be followed by a further victory in Co-op retail shops.

In 1961, Woolworth stores in South Wales and Monmouthshire refused to negotiate with the Union for wage improvements or grant facilities for collecting Union dues. The women marched out of the stores in protest and the company almost immediately announced the introduction of a revised wage scale in their 1,060 stores. Collecting facilities were also agreed.

The Union's most ambitious campaign was targeted at House of Fraser, who refused to negotiate with the Union but nevertheless revised basic wage rates and provided substantial increases.

The end of the decade saw the restructuring of the Union's divisions and marked the beginning of SATA – a section of Usdaw established to attract supervisory and managerial staff.

*125 Years Strong*

# The 1970s



*The '70s was a decade of incomes policy with successive Conservative and Labour Governments attempting to control collective bargaining, ultimately to their cost. It was also a period of growing unemployment and spiralling inflation.*

*Edward Heath's state of emergency, the miners' strike, the three-day week and power cuts led the country to reject the Conservative Government at the 1974 General Election. With Labour back in power the hated Industrial Relations Act was repealed and replaced by the Employment Protection Act which heralded a massive extension of individual workers' rights.*

*Since 1979, and the return of a Conservative Government, there has been a steady stream of legislation attacking trade unions and their members.*





*Usdaw has been to the fore in encouraging mass screening to detect cancer in its early stages. In 1977 the Union's Eastern Division raised money to buy a mobile clinic for the Women's National Cancer Control Campaign.*



*Usdaw members demonstrate for Equal Rights for men and women at a TUC/Labour Party rally.*



The 1970s was a period of rapid advance in both recruitment and the establishment of stronger negotiating and bargaining relationships with a number of major employers.

Usdaw's membership soared from 316,000 to 470,000 by the end of the decade. National campaigns at Woolworths, Boots, major tailoring firms, mail order and supermarkets saw membership reach an all-time high.

Another source of building membership was to come through amalgamation – such a merger took place in 1977 with the Scottish Bakers Union – SUBAW.

One of the biggest disputes in the Union's history occurred in 1970 when 8,000 CIS Agents went on strike over a claim for a general expense allowance. TUC General Secretary Vic Feather was eventually called in to break the eight-week deadlock. The case was settled by arbitration.

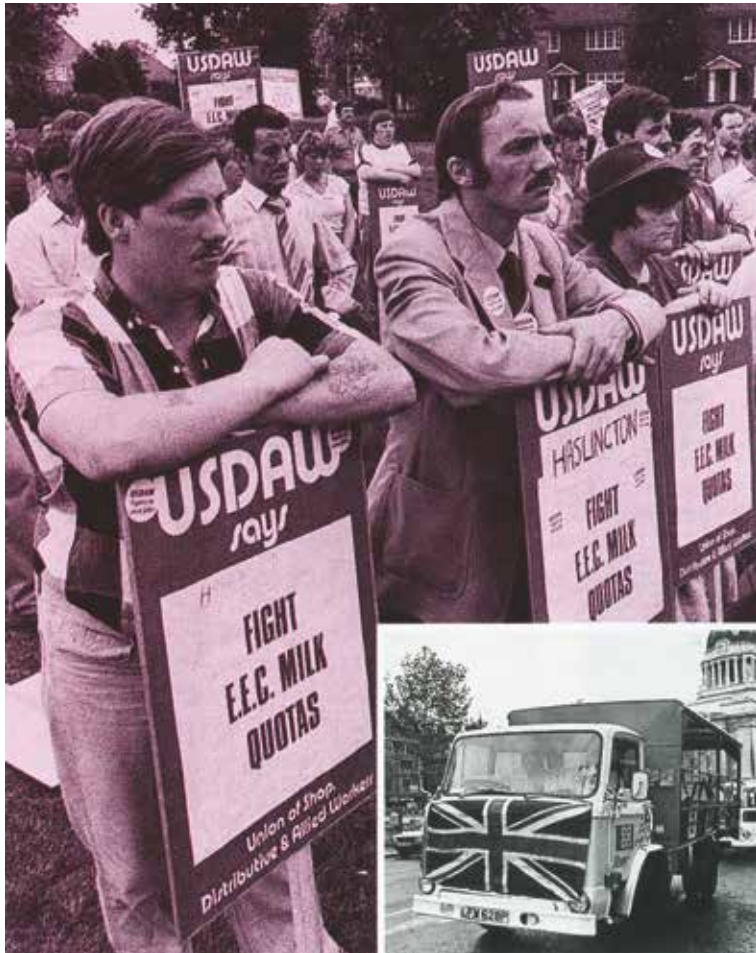
In 1972 the Union faced a major crisis when it was suspended briefly from the TUC. The Tories' Industrial Relations Act had become law and, although Usdaw had fought vigorously against implementation the ADM failed to support the Executive Council's proposition to deregister.

The decision was contrary to TUC policy and Usdaw was suspended. But a special delegate meeting gave the Executive the authority to comply with the TUC's policy of non-registration. Usdaw was once again a member of the TUC.

*125 Years Strong*



# The Early '80s



*The successful campaign to save the doorstep pinta gained massive public support throughout the country.*



*Usdaw banners were well to the fore as trade unionists marched through the streets of Cheltenham to demonstrate their solidarity with civil servants at GCHQ, who were denied the right to belong to a union.*



*Thousands of Usdaw members took to the streets to demonstrate against cuts to the National Health Service.*



*During the miners' strike Usdaw members generously contributed to the food convoy, which travelled from London to Barnsley to help the Yorkshire miners and their families.*



In the 1980s we witnessed a Tory Government hell-bent on destroying Usdaw and the rest of the Trade Union Movement.

Usdaw's emergence as a campaigning union saw members demonstrating on a wider range of issues than ever before.

Sunday trading was again in the spotlight. Usdaw gave detailed evidence to the Auld Committee of Inquiry and mounted a massive campaign to stop a Sunday free-for-all.

Another highly publicised and successful campaign to save the doorstep pinta gained massive public support whilst Government moves to dilute the power of the wages councils, and threats to axe them altogether, saw Usdaw members united in action once more.

Usdaw members joined fellow trade unionists to demonstrate their total opposition to the Government's Employment and Trade Union Acts. They campaigned on behalf of the unemployed, GCHQ workers, nurses, etc, while their generosity in providing food for striking miners' families was second to none.

The participation of women in the Union took on a new prominence. A working party to examine their role was formed and its recommendation to set up a network of women's committees was put into operation.



# A Troubled Decade

*The campaign to defeat the hated 'Poll tax', which hit low paid workers hard, was ultimately successful.*







*These members wore costumes to illustrate the Union's rejection of Victorian values when Usdaw's 300,000-signature petition to Save the Family Sunday was presented to the Queen in 1986.*



*Young members joined Usdaw officials in a wreath-laying ceremony outside 10 Downing Street to mark the burial of wage protection for young workers before the launch of Usdaw's Poverty Pay Campaign in 1986.*



he 1980s was a turbulent decade with industrial disputes commonplace as the Tory Government introduced anti-trade union employment legislation.

This political and industrial unrest would culminate in the era-defining Miners' Strike of 1984-85 and this was followed closely by the printers' dispute at Wapping in London. While these conflicts grabbed the headlines workers in Usdaw sectors also saw their wage protection and employment rights withdrawn or restricted.

Unemployment among young workers was particularly widespread while overall figures showed more than three million jobless by the mid '80s – unprecedented since the great depression of the 1930s.

Race riots also flared up in parts of the UK during the decade and these were followed by national demonstrations against the Government's introduction of a tax based on people rather than property. It was quickly dubbed 'the poll tax' – a policy that played a pivotal role in the demise of prime minister Margaret Thatcher by the early '90s.

Meanwhile Usdaw continued to work closely with the TUC and Labour Party to put forward an industrial and political alternative. The seeds were sown in the late '80s and early '90s but the labour movement would have to wait until 1997 to put these into practice.

*125 Years Strong*

# The Campaigning Union for Today and Tomorrow



“Many people have often predicted the end of trade unions. In fact some people would be only too happy to see the end of unions. However, after 125 years, it’s clear Usdaw is here to stay. Our forebears laid the foundations that have been strengthened, built on and expanded by generations of trade union members whose main aim has always been to protect and improve the working conditions of its members. That work continues today with the fantastic dedication of our reps and staff.”

**John Hannett,  
General Secretary**



**Usdaw**  
*Union of Shop, Distributive  
and Allied Workers*

As Usdaw passed its 100th year in 1991 familiar problems were evident: The recession in the early '90s saw a continued fall in membership, a Conservative Government, surprisingly re-elected in 1992, had indicted its wish yet again to deregulate Sunday trading and shackle the trade unions further. A quarter of a century later the Union faced these very same challenges.

The crucial difference for Usdaw however, was in the period 1991-2016 it had completely reshaped its way of working as an organisation having embarked on an ambitious modernisation programme from 2006. It had also invested heavily in the training and support for its reps and officials resulting in an almost uninterrupted 20 years of membership growth leaving the Union financially strong, and far better equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

Historically the retail and distributive trades have always adapted to consumer habits and demands. This is unlikely to change. Usdaw's central role in coping with and managing those changes to ensure its members remain at the heart of the industrial landscape will continue to drive us forward.

The past 25 years have seen tremendous upheaval in Usdaw sectors but our presence remains constant. Our determination to respond to those changes remains steadfast.

*125 Years Strong*



# A Union of Many Trades





*Since the early '90s the doorstep delivery has declined rapidly, despite Usdaw's campaign to save it, as the supermarkets provided cheaper options.*

*By 2015 the vast majority of the UK's milk was processed by just two companies Ireland's Arla and German-owned Müller.*



*While the home shopping sector has seen massive consolidation, the loss of familiar names, and thousands of job losses, the share of internet sales continues to rise especially in the UK.*



**A**lthough commonly known as 'the Shopworkers' Union' Usdaw can justifiably claim to represent tens of thousands of other workers in the transport, distribution, food manufacturing, chemical and other sectors.

Over the years it has built up an unrivalled expertise in dealing with the issues and concerns of its members in these sectors. It has also developed a strong network of reps, holds national trade conferences and runs divisional committees to cement the Union's role.

In the last 25 years all of these sectors have seen major reorganisation, with depot closures and openings, changes to the drivers' regulations, mergers/takeovers, outsourcing, and the influx of overseas workers. Despite all of this Usdaw maintains a strong presence in all industries thanks to the determination and hard work of its activists and officials.

However, one industry where Usdaw's presence has declined is the milk sector. The traditional employed milkman has all but disappeared. On the production side, mergers became increasingly common as did automation. By 2000 the Co-operative movement had begun to exit the milk industry and further consolidation continued apace.

The mail order/home shopping sector has also been transformed. The catalogue, once present in most working class homes, has been replaced by the internet revolution.

*125 Years Strong*



# Education and Training



*During the last 25 years the Union has overhauled its training and education programme for not only its reps but its organising and senior officials.*





*Academy2 2006*



*Branch Officer Course 2005*



*Summer School 1  
2009*

**U**sdaw has always put training and education at the top of its agenda and has a proud history of offering members a 'second chance'. A number of members have gone on to graduate from university having returned to learning because of the opportunities offered by the Union.

It is no surprise that Usdaw's unprecedented growth has been fuelled by a small army of dedicated and committed activists who receive expert training once they become a rep.

The Union's Home Study Course offers interested members an easy-to-use introduction in to the world of trade unions, which members complete at home and are then given feedback by a Union tutor.

Introductory courses are offered to new reps within weeks of their election and this then opens up a number of follow-on courses dealing with health and safety, employment rights and the law, pensions and the organising and recruitment agenda.

The Union's summer schools have been revamped, branch officers have their own tailor-made course and the Union's very best reps can take part in the Organising Academy – a six-month secondment to the Union where reps, mentored by an Area Organiser, recruit and organise across their division. Graduates of Academy1 are then eligible for Academy2. The Union draws the vast majority of new officials from its Academy graduates.

*125 Years Strong*

# Shopping Trends



*In the UK, the retail sector constitutes a vital part of the economy, contributing 6 per cent of GDP and is worth £378 billion. It employs around 2.8 million people or 1 in 10 of the workforce and there are over 300,000 retail premises (2016 figures).*





*A number of investigations by the Government were carried out into the retail sector although the retailers were largely exonerated of any wrong-doing.*



*In the aftermath of the 2008 recession, hard-discounters Aldi, Lidl and others began to eat in to the market share of the more established companies.*

By the 1990s most towns and cities saw the dominance of the out-of-town superstores, retail warehouses, regional shopping malls and outlet centres. This was a direct consequence of the loosening of the planning regulations in the 1980s.

However, by the end of the 1990s opposition to these massive developments was growing as traditional town centres became the victims of the out-of-town developments. By the early 2000s a 'town centres first' policy signalled a change of direction. The dominance of the big retailers also became a topical issue for the media as did UK prices compared to their European equivalent. Perceived unfair business practices towards suppliers and the concentration of power by some retailers dominated the agenda.

By the early 2000s the fashion for the superstore was waning and the convenience sector began to rise. Many of the big retailers launched their own chains or bought existing operators to enter this expanding market. The decade also saw consolidation in the mid-range supermarket sector too.

The battle for customers saw a price-war emerge after the 2008 crash. Most of the major retailers also underwent massive organisational change impacting on staff, pay and terms and conditions. By 2015 grocery market share was: Tesco 28 per cent, Sainsbury's 17, Asda 16, Morrisons 11, Co-op 6, others 22 per cent.

*125 Years Strong*



# The Equality Agenda



*Usdaw's women members were at the forefront of the campaign for equal rights.*



*The last national Women's Conference was held in 2005 as the Union revamped its equalities structures.*



*The first LGBT get-together was held in 2013.*



*The Black Members' Weekend remains an important event in the Union's calendar.*

The Union's drive to reflect the diversity of its membership made significant strides in the 1980s when it established its women committees. These were instrumental in promoting more women to positions of power and influence both locally and nationally.

By the 1990s it was recognised this equality agenda should be extended to encourage more black and ethnic minority involvement and national and divisional structures were put in place to facilitate this. The first National Black Workers' Conference was held in 1993, the same year the Executive Council published a statement on racism. By the late 1990s a move to encourage a similar campaign among lesbian and gay members also began to take off.

Throughout the 1990s Usdaw led the campaign to press for equal treatment of part-time workers – for many years treated as second-class citizens at work. In particular many part-time workers were not allowed to join their company's pension scheme. Success, via the European Union, would follow by 2000.

In 2005 the Union decided to revamp its equality section, bringing gender, race, sexual orientation and disability under one umbrella with divisional equalities committees operating under the Union's National Equalities Advisory Group. Usdaw also made extensive efforts to increase the involvement of its young members with divisional and national committees set up to encourage more participation.

*125 Years Strong*



# The Political Voice



*Udaw delegations were regular visitors to 10 Downing Street while Labour was in power delivering massive petitions and evidence-based arguments on everything from Sunday trading, low pay, abuse at work and better rights for carers.*





*Usdaw worked closely with the Labour Party in the '80s and '90s to promote a political alternative to the Tory Government.*

*Result of Political Fund Ballot announcement in 1985. Usdaw members voted 7 to 1 in favour.*

*Unions had to run a ballot every ten years to maintain their political funds, which the Union had done successfully in 1985, and went on to repeat its success in 1995, 2005 and 2015.*

Usdaw has always been a loyal supporter and critical friend of the Labour Party but that link continued to be put under pressure by successive Tory Governments in the '90s.

After the 1992 general election the Conservatives introduced the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Bill, resulting in the 1993 Trade Union Act that compelled unions to re-sign their members every three years if they used the check-off system. The Tories had also systematically stripped away employment and wages protections for low paid workers during the 1980s and '90s when they abolished the Wages Councils and amended the Shops Act. While Usdaw lost this battle it would never lose sight of the importance of legal protection for the low paid.

With the election of Labour in 1997 hostility towards the unions began to reverse. The Employment Relations Bill offered improved workers' rights particularly on maternity and paternity provision and the three-year check-off law was scrapped.

Probably the biggest change was on wage protection. Usdaw led the campaign for a National Minimum Wage and was vindicated when the Labour Government introduced it in 1999 at £3.40 an hour for over 22 year-olds. Again opposed by the Tories at the time they too would come round to accepting it as an essential safeguard.

*125 Years Strong*

# Legal Plus and FirstCall





Another outstanding success for the Union has been its ability to win compensation for injured members, successfully represent them at employment tribunals and offer a range of additional legal services to members and their families.

Since 1991 Usdaw's Legal Plus and FirstCall service has recovered more than £255 million for members either injured or treated unfairly at work.

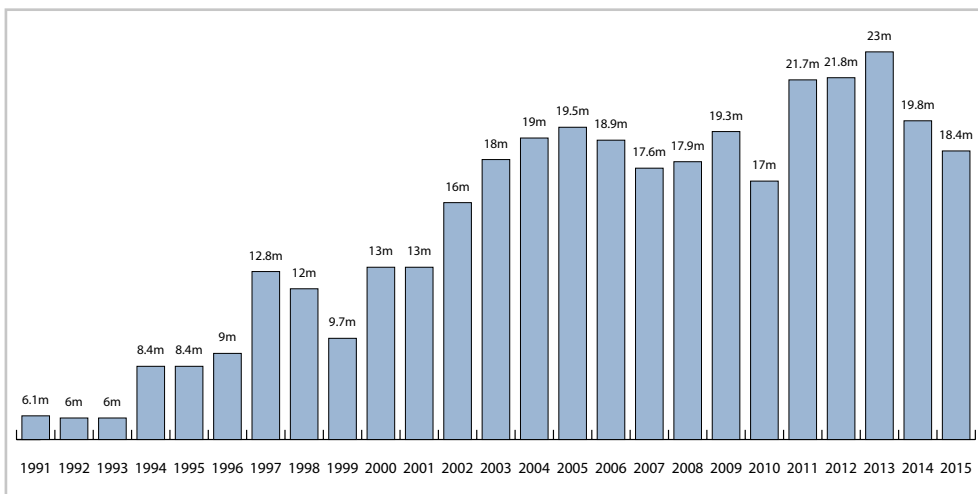
In addition it has offered members legal representation for family members accidentally injured, and legal advice on issues outside of work and access to a free will writing service with local solicitors for members.

Expert advice on health and safety and pensions is also available to members.

In 2008 Usdaw launched its free direct claims line – FirstCall Usdaw – which streamlined the application process for members injured regardless of the place or time of the accident. It has been a resounding success and has turned once potentially lengthy, frustrating and time consuming processes into a fast-track method of settling claims quickly and efficiently.

Legal Plus and FirstCall Usdaw have also contributed to Usdaw's appeal and workplace profile as reps promote the service to recruit new members as part of special campaign days held in workplaces across the UK.

## Awards for members won by Legal Plus 1991-2015



*Usdaw's legal services have provided excellent support for members injured either at or outside of work.*

*125 Years Strong*



# Building the Union in the New Millennium



*Membership has grown in almost all Usdaw organised sectors.*

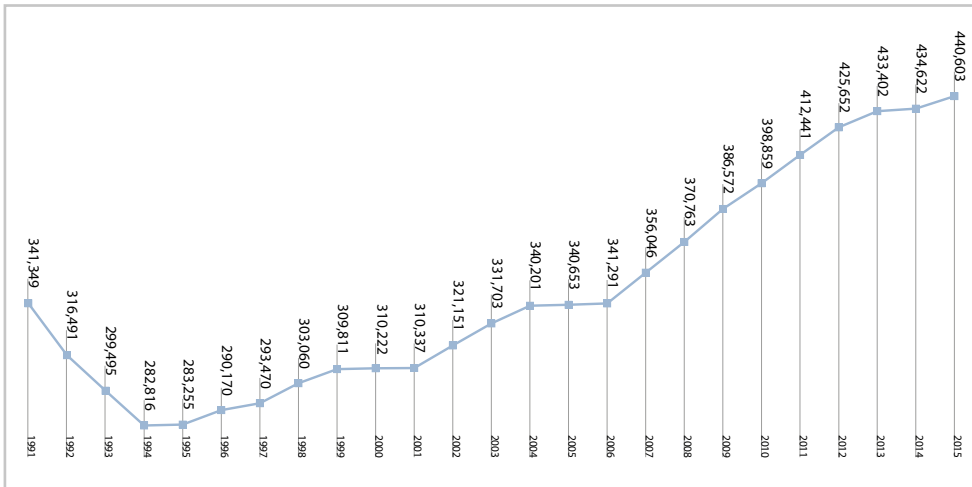


Usdaw has enjoyed unprecedented levels of growth in the last 20 years. This is no accident as the Union has overhauled and revamped its recruitment and organising methods. In addition it also introduced its own modernising programme in 2006 that revolutionised how it conducted and managed its internal structures.

In 1991 the Union's membership totalled 341,000 but by 1994 this had fallen to a nadir of 282,000, despite recruiting more than 60,000 new members a year. In 1979 the Union had around 450,000 members. The TUC boasted 13.5 million affiliated members – this would fall to 6.5 million by 2015.

However, while trade unions continued to lose members, and the trend towards mergers could not disguise the decline, Usdaw slowly but surely began to firstly, slow the decline and then reverse the fall in its membership. Key turning points included; a refocusing of the Union's recruitment strategy with added emphasis on the 'Big Four' retailers of Tesco, Sainsbury, Morrisons and the Co-op; more investment in the reps' training programme; the launch of the Union's own Organising Academy, which saw hand-picked reps seconded to the Union for six months; the use of reps on stand-down hours to recruit in their own and nearby workplaces; and the introduction of modern working methods for organising staff designed for them to help their reps deliver a better service to members.

## Membership: A 21st Century Success Story



*In the last 25 years Usdaw has grown from 341,000 to 434,000 members – a 30 per cent increase – almost 25 years of continuous growth an achievement unparalleled in the modern trade union movement.*

*125 Years Strong*

# Save our Sundays

The issue of Sunday trading and plans to deregulate it completely, have been a constant threat to the working patterns of not only retail staff over the last 25 years but also those workers in the transport and distributive trades too.

In the early 1990s such was the clamour for Sunday trading from some retailers they knowingly broke the law and opened on a Sunday. Usdaw immediately lobbied local councils and MPs to prosecute the law-breakers and in 1991 at least 60 injunctions were issued against illegal trading.

However, the issue would not go away and some companies continuously lobbied the Government for change. The Union's warning that Sunday premiums would disappear if unregulated Sunday trading was allowed would turn out to be correct.

Illegal opening continued and when high street butcher chain Dewhurst collapsed in 1992 it blamed Sunday trading.

In 1993 Labour MP Ray Powell spearheaded the Union's campaign, aiming to enshrine premium payments in law if deregulation went through.

Meanwhile, Usdaw's appeal to staff not to volunteer to work on Sundays was partly ignored and the Union began to rethink its stance coming out in late 1993 with its decision to accept Sunday trading for large stores but only with a 6-hour trading window.

It was a controversial decision, unpopular with some activists, but it was taken in recognition that many staff were working Sundays regardless of the Union's policy and that compromise with employers and Government was better than total deregulation. It was a pivotal moment.



*The Houses of Parliament saw Usdaw lobby MPs to prevent unregulated Sunday trading.*

*'No more victorian working practices' was an Usdaw theme to defeat Sunday trading.*





2006 – Usdaw convinced the Labour Government not to introduce unregulated Sunday trading.



2014 – Usdaw kept up the pressure on the Coalition Government to resist deregulating Sunday trading.



2016 – Activists, officials and MPs in the House of Commons to Keep Sunday Special.

Following discussions with all interested parties the 1994 Sunday Trading Act became law, restricting large stores to only six hours and offering the workers the opportunity to ‘opt out’ of Sunday working. Legal protection of premiums was not included although the Union did sign agreements that year with eight companies to protect premiums. Further changes in the Deregulation Act in 1995 further weakened workers’ protection.

Sunday trading reappeared again in 2000 as pressure mounted from some retailers and the Union responded vigorously. (Protection for workers in Scotland, where trading laws are different, would be introduced in 2004, although a campaign to stop New Year’s Day trading in Scotland would fail). The Sunday trading issue continued to bubble under but Usdaw would triumph again in 2006 as its lobbying, petitions and evidence-based surveys persuaded the Government to ditch its plans to deregulate.

However, after the election of a Tory Government in 2015 it announced plans to allow local councils to extend Sunday opening hours. Usdaw’s campaign began yet again; parliamentary lobbies, a national petition, evidence to the Government and more than 12,000 members emailing their local MP to put Usdaw’s case against deregulation once more won the day and the proposal was defeated in the House of Commons in early March 2016. A stunning victory for Usdaw – yet again!

*125 Years Strong*

# The Campaigning Union



*The Union's message that 'Abuse is not part of the job' struck a chord particularly with staff but also with employers, politicians and the shopping public who all gave their support, in varying degrees, to the campaign.*



Usdaw has strengthened its claim to be the Campaigning Union with a number of high profile, award-winning and very successful campaigns.



*The annual Supporting Parents and Carers Spotlight day has focused on rights to request flexible working, in-work benefit entitlements and support for carers.*



*By 2015 the Lifelong Learning campaign had helped more than 100,000 workers back into learning, set up groundbreaking learning centres at 60 sites and trained more than 800 Union Learning Reps to help deliver courses for members.*

From 2000 the Union was forced into lobbying MPs to stop retailers opening on Christmas Day after a handful of stores opened on December 25. Labour MP Kevan Jones would successfully sponsor a Bill leading to the Christmas Day Trading Act 2004 outlawing large stores from opening on December 25 in England and Wales.

As a response to ever-increasing levels of verbal abuse, threatening behaviour and violence towards staff Usdaw launched its Freedom From Fear campaign in 2003.

The Lifelong Learning campaign was launched in 2001 and aimed to give Union members 'a second chance'. Many staff were keen to take up courses in English, maths, IT, and more to improve their skills and enhance their job prospects. In 2003 the Labour Government gave Union Learning Reps the same legal status as 'regular' Union Reps.

The Supporting Parents and Carers campaign has successfully put the pressures faced by members with parental and caring responsibilities high up the political and industrial agenda.

All of these campaigns have played a vital part in Usdaw's growth in the last 20 years.

*125 Years Strong*

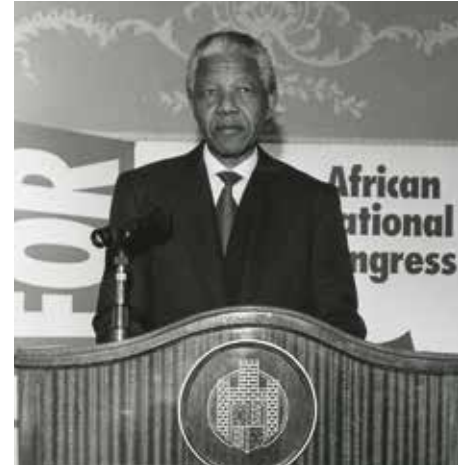


# International Affairs



*Usdaw joined the TUC to campaign against the Apartheid regime and call for democratic elections in South Africa.*

*Usdaw was also involved in setting up the early European Works Councils at multi-national companies.  
Photo: Kellogg's officials from Denmark, Germany, Spain and England (Wrexham & Manchester) - 1993.*





*In 2014 Usdaw added its voice to the call for UK retailers to sign up to the Bangladesh Accord after 1,100 textile workers were killed in the Rana Plaza tragedy.*

Usdaw continued to support trade unionists abroad in the '90s as part of its commitment to international worker solidarity. Its campaign against the Apartheid regime received an early boost in February 1990 when Nelson Mandela was released from jail in South Africa after 27 years signalling the beginning of the end for white minority rule in the country. Arrangements were made for the first democratic elections in the following years.

Closer to home, Usdaw continued to press for improvements in workers' rights at a European Union level and worked closely with Euro-Fiet an international federation of unions which registered early successes for protection and pension rights for part-time workers. As the decade progressed further rights on working time limits were introduced via the EU. In 2009 Euro-Fiet went through a re-organisation to become the Union Network International Global Union with Usdaw's General Secretary John Hannett currently President of its Europa Commerce section.

Usdaw also continued to support the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, the Irish Confederation of Trade Unions, and has hosted delegations of trade unionists from around the world from time to time. Usdaw was also part of the campaign to protect overseas workers after the Rana Plaza tragedy urging companies to sign the Accord that called for comprehensive improvements in safety to protect workers.

*125 Years Strong*



- Usdaw's membership stands at 341,000.
- Tesco's market share reaches 16.4 per cent.

1991

- Usdaw raises concerns on zero hours contracts at the TUC conference.
- Usdaw holds its first national Black Members get-together.

1993

- First DIY checkouts introduced at Safeway on a trial basis.

1995

- Labour's Tony Blair wins a landslide general election victory with a 177 seat majority.

1997

- First superstores open 24 hours at weekends in a trial period (excluding Sundays).

1996

- The National Lottery is launched and Littlewoods Pools goes into sharp decline with thousands of job losses.
- Disability Discrimination Act introduced.
- Kwik Save announces plans to close 107 stores.

1998

- Somerfield take over Kwik Save.
- Tesco/Usdaw Partnership Agreement signed and heralded as groundbreaking.
- Tesco now has 63 stores trading 24 hours six days a week.
- 1st National Political Conference held in Liverpool.
- Hard discounters Aldi, Lidl and Netto make ripples in the sector with 2.3 per cent total market share.



- Labour introduces the National Minimum Wage at £3.60 an hour for over 22 year-olds.
- First elections for devolved Scottish and Welsh 'parliaments'.

- Labour introduces Working Families Tax Credits.
- Usdaw/Littlewoods sign Partnership Deal.

1999

- Labour win again with a 165 seat majority.
- Usdaw launches its Lifelong Learning campaign and Labour announces new rights for Union Learning Reps.
- The Union announces plans to merge its Manchester and North Western divisions – the first major reorganisation for 30 years.

2001

2000

- Dutch-owned C&A close all 113 of its UK stores with 4,800 job losses
- Somerfield puts its 350 Kwik Save stores up for sale

2002

- Upheaval in mail order sector begins as Littlewoods sells to Shop Direct, owned by reclusive Barclay brothers, for £750 million.
- Protect Christmas Day campaign launched by Usdaw.
- The fight for control of the convenience sector begins.



- Freedom From Fear campaign launched.
- Usdaw opens its own Academy specialist training programme.
- First self-scan checkouts at six Sainsbury's stores, while Tesco already has 77 at 16 of its stores.
- Home shopping GUS is bought by Shop Direct for £590m.
- Equality (Sexual Orientation) Act outlaws discrimination on sex or religious grounds.



# 1991 – 2015



- Labour's historic third consecutive win sees them back in power with a 66 seat majority.
- Index stores are closed with 3,200 job losses.
- Littlewoods stores are sold to Associated British foods (owners of Primark).
- Usdaw issues multi language recruitment leaflets for the first time.

2005

- Kwik Save stores close and 1,500 jobs are lost.

2007

- Widespread job losses.
- Wage freezes common particularly in the public sector
- House prices fall by 16 per cent.
- Unemployment reaches more than two million.

2009



- Tesco's market share reaches 30 per cent.
- Usdaw's membership passes the 400,000 mark for the first time since 1988.

2011

- The UK is in the longest recession since the 1930s, tens of thousands of retail jobs are lost, the number of employees on zero-hours contracts expand and pay rates have fallen for the last 38 out of 39 months.

2013

- The Conservatives win a surprising general election victory with a 10 seat majority and attack unions with a Trade Union Bill.
- Some retailers compete to pay the highest hourly rate.
- Deregulating Sunday Trading is back on the Government's agenda.
- The Chancellor announces a so-called living wage while revealing plans to slash in-work benefits.

2015

2004

- Morrisons takes over rival Safeway.
- Christmas Day Trading Act introduced banning large stores from opening in England & Wales on December 25.
- Somerfield closes 22 Kwik Save stores in Scotland and buys 114 small Safeway stores.

2006

- The Office of Fair Trading refers the grocery market to the Competition Commission for the second time after retailers come under fire for being too powerful.
- Save Our Sundays campaign launched and by the end of the year the Government abandons plans to deregulate.
- Somerfield sells off its Kwik Save stores



2008

- In November Woolworths 820 stores and distribution network are put into administration 30,000 jobs are lost by the following January.
- The Co-op Group takes over Somerfield
- FirstCall Usdaw, the Union's direct claims line, is launched.
- Global recession takes hold.

2010

- The UK has a Coalition Government for the first time since the 1930s with David Cameron's Conservatives the biggest Party.
- Disability Discrimination Act introduced.

2012

- Usdaw wins landmark legal case for ex-Woolworths staff, although some miss out sparking a three-year legal battle, which ends up, unsuccessfully for workers, at the European Court of Justice.
- Pensions auto-enrolment begins for big firms.
- To co-incide with the London Olympics the Government forces through deregulation on Sunday working, which turns out to be a big flop.



2014

- Online UK sales exceed almost £45 billion (almost 15 per cent of total UK sales, the highest in Europe).
- Employment tribunal cases fall by 80 per cent after the introduction of fees.
- The Co-op Group announces a £2.5 billion loss.
- The Government's Budget reveals a major shake-up of the pensions sector.







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