

UNISON WEST MIDLANDS REGION

From the

14th UNISON National Delegates Conference, Brighton

Wednesday 20th June 2007

The news sheet team would like to apologise for the typing error in yesterday's news sheet given to Conference Delegates. In Steve's welcoming article it should have read "sadly, because of medical advice." As you can imagine, deciphering Steve's handwriting is a difficult task at times!

Motion 53

BOYCOTT ISRAEL.....BUILD PALESTINE

Boycotting Israel looms large in this afternoon's debate on Palestine. Proposer's of motion 53 are keen the debate doesn't confuse means and ends. The Wolverhampton motion is foursquare behind a boycott. 'A boycott', says the motion, 'will be ONE of the means to end the occupation', build a Palestinian state and a loving home to the Refugees just as a boycott was ONE means to overthrow Apartheid.

COSATU, the South African Trade Union Federation, sees the parallels between Apartheid and Israel – Palestine. They have called for a worldwide trade union led boycott of Israel.

Motion 53 calls for an economic, cultural, academic and sporting boycott. Such a boycott will provide a framework for campaigning. It will channel the energies of supporters.

I would ask you to consider the boycott before buying another Jaffa orange or Caterpillar fashion wear.

Motion 53 doesn't claim that a boycott alone will end the occupation. Whilst at conference visit the Palestine Solidarity Campaign Stall situated on the 1st Floor of the Conference Centre. You may wish to join PSC. Collect from the stall the material you'll need for work in your Branch.

Bob Deacon, Wolverhampton Branch



West Midlands priority motions

Today

Motion 53 Palestine

Motion 63 Global warming

Tomorrow

Motion 57 Rise of the BNP

Behind the Scenes at NDC 2007

The planning for this weeks conferences started back in June 2006, right after NDC 2006 finished. The National Conference Team are continually preparing for the forthcoming conference.

3300 National Delegates are expected to attend this year's conference with 750 visitors. 263 of those 3300 Delegates are from the West Midlands Region. 12 Regions are represented.

This year there will be 25 stands in the Main Foyer and Unizone. During the week over 3000 Conference Bags will be given out.

In 1 day on the Unison Welfare stand they gave out over 600 pencils and 1000 bugs! That's 3600 pencils and 6000 bugs over the week!

Up to 200 pairs of Croc's will be leaving the Conference Centre by Friday, from the KLODHOPPERS stand. So far our News Sheet Team have purchased 2 new pairs!

There are 3 Press Officers.

Upstairs in the News Sheet Areas there are 7 IT guys running round after us and looking after 28 printers and 68 computers.

Calm Zone is doing 76 therapies per day, that's 19 each therapists, covering from head to toe. Each therapy costs £5.

Card Votes, each Branch has a 5 digit number, one of the West Mids Branches has the easiest to remember 12345 – Severn Trent.

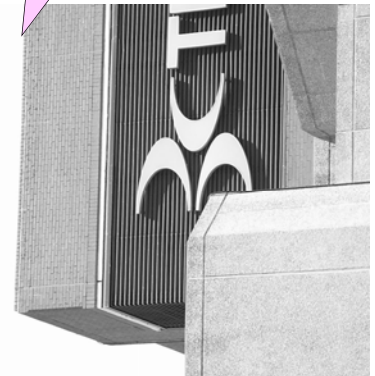
Julie Whitbrook, Severn Trent Water and News Sheet Team



Thanks to all of you who joined fellow delegates at the regional meeting. Some branches still have not collected their card votes—please do so!

Obscure photo.....

Can you guess where this photo is within Brighton? Correct answers given to the news sheet team will be worthy of a prize!





Featured here is John Besseman from Communications at Mabledon Place and they are promoting the 2007 campaign, Breaking the Chains.

If Branches would like to order this year diaries, please do so via John.

Branches who order at Conference will receive a free gift.

In response to Lou Gladden's article

It is very clear that the Motion 49, 'New Labour – what are we getting for our money?' is designed to address what a substantial number of members feel is an unbalance of 'best value'. The money that goes to the Labour Party through the APF reflects an historical situation when the Labour Party worked on behalf of the Trade Union Movement and the working class in general, However today in light of many perverse policies and decisions such as attacks on pay, further privatisation, the whole pensions debate and the like, we have to ask whether that historical link still has relevance. Motion 49 only asks for full review of the current arrangements. Consider the following; this Labour Government refuses to support the Trade Union Freedom Bill that would restore rights to Trade Union Members equal to those gained over 100 years ago in the Trade Disputes Act of 1906. Although promised within the Warwick Agreement the Labour Government has not kept to its commitment. Further, I have to challenge Lou Gladden, as he states that by challenging the Labour Link, results in 'drumming up support for the BNP and other fringe parties'. There is absolutely no evidence to support that opinion and as a member of a 'fringe' party, the Greens' I would like to remind him that in his own town has more fringe activist than that there are Labour Party. Members challenged the four BNP candidates when delivering 8000 leaflets at the recent elections. Oh yes – he is also staying in a town that has a substantial number of Green elected councillors running this authority.

Jonathon Sedgebeer, Telford Branch

Quiz—Food & Drink

1. A Cappuccino coffee is named after what?
2. What temperature does water boil at in degrees centigrade?
3. Chop Suey – a dish of chopped simmered vegetables – originated in which country?
4. The brewery at St. James's Gate in Dublin is home to which beer?
5. The tomato originates in which South American country?

What's on in the Unizone today

Show Racism the Red Card
 Unison Equalities Scheme
 Trade Union Rights in Belarus
 Unison URL net
 Your Recruitment journey
 Fair Wages Tool Kit lunch time special

Numbers Quiz Answer

What is 23 squared? **429**

What date is Remembrance Day? **November 11th**

What percentage of the world's population is under 25 years of age? **50%**

How many millimetres in one metre? **1000**

The opposite sides of a dice cube always add up to how many? **7**

The competition winner will receive £25 gift voucher kindly donated by Frizzell.

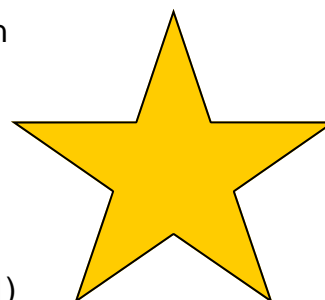
Fringe meetings today

Black Members Caucus (12.45-1.45 Beta East 2)

Health and Safety: Sickness Absence Guide for Unison Safety Reps (12.45-1.45 Alpha East 1)

The General Political Fund: Unison's political campaigning voice—come and find out all you need to know about the GPF (12.45-1.45 Alpha East 2)

Positively Public: Time to Care (12.45-1.45 Beta East 1)
Unison and Water Aid: End Water Poverty (12.45-1.45 Buckingham Room, Hilton Metropole Hotel)



International Solidarity Meeting

Monday night 19th June 2007 was Conferences International Meeting. The two main speakers were Abdula Muzarau from the General Federation of Iraq Workers (GFIW) and Maung – Maung, Trade Union leader in Burma. Both spoke with passion of the oppression that Trade Unionists faced in their respective countries including the kidnapping and murder of Trade Union Leaders. Up to 25 Trade Union Leaders are in prison at present in Burma (one has been sentenced to life plus 27 years!). Burma was one of the most repressive regimes in the world and designates all Trade Unionists as 'Terrorists' and even goes as far as to report them to Interpol as such! Abduluah whilst speaking of hope for the future also spoke of the difficulties faced from the Saddani Legacy, extremism and the occupation. Both spoke of the importance of unionists support for the future of their movements. The savage repressions our comrade unionists face across the world often put our own concerns into sharp perspective and hopefully remind us of the importance of international solidarity.

Dave Auger, Regional International Officer

Black Members' Caucus Meeting Tuesday 19th June 2007 @ 12.45

Bev Miller introduced herself to those present and asked that each delegate introduce themselves. Delegates were asked to support Motion 23 and Motion 25 are prioritised. Concern was raised from the floor that these motions may not be heard at conference as it has been noted that conference at present is running behind. One delegate voiced their concern 'conference after conference why do we have to fight to have our motions heard!' In relation to the flyer supported by Housing Corporations Branch; Hackney LG; Greenwich LG and Bromley Branch those were advised that these branches had made an apology to the representatives of the National Black Members Committee. Delegates are awaiting a response from the President which they hope to receive before the close of conference.

African Snow

Corn Exchange, Brighton Dome
Tuesday 12 – Sat 23 June, 7.30pm
2.30pm matinees, Wed 20 & Sat 23 Jun
Box Office 01273 709709

Breaking the Chains

It was suggested that members purchase a t-shirt from the UNISON stall in support of this years' UNISON Campaign and wear them with pride on Thursday to show unity and solidarity. Those present were advised that each region have been advised from National office to purchase a number of t – shirts each Regional Secretary has been informed of this.

Sue Higgins, Chair West Midlands Region Black Members SOG



Dave's response to Lou

Shropshire Branch Secretary Claims other members of the union "want to stop my involvement" in the Labour party – No they don't. His argument on the basis of personal freedom is that they choose to opt into the APF and no one should be able to challenge that. I pay into the GPF yet, APF payers can be part of the decision making for where that fund goes.

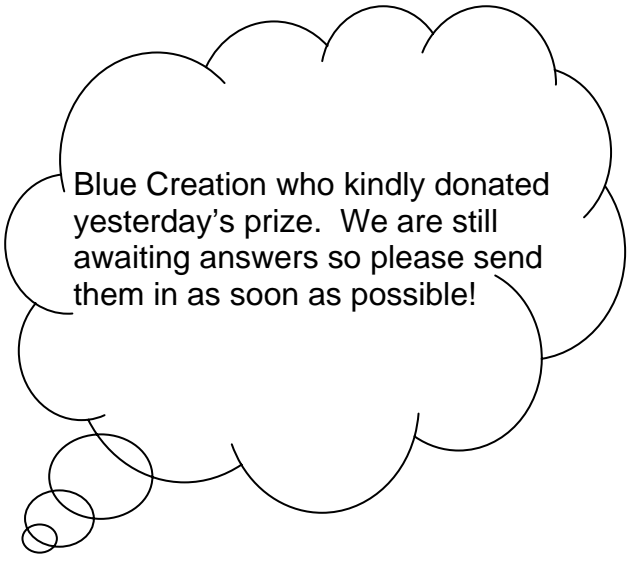
The fact is the Labour Party no longer represents the aspirations of Trade Unionists. Many of us work for Labour Councils and know that their privatisation and cuts agenda is seriously affecting our members. Those working in other service areas feel the same effects from the Governments' privatisation agenda and the reality is our members are increasingly questioning our links to New Labour. The suggestion that the opponents of the link encourage the BNP (giving the abject failure of many Labour Councils to challenge the BNP and New Labours increasingly rightwing agenda) is not only insulting it is wrong. The Branch Secretary concludes that the only reason Labour Link is not successful is that too many people don't want it to be. Sorry Lou, the reason Labour Link is not successful is because New Labour stopped listening long ago.

Dave Auger, Wolverhampton Labour Branch



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Blue Creation who kindly donated yesterday's prize. We are still awaiting answers so please send them in as soon as possible!

Motion 76.3 National Health Service

An exert from Pat's speech which, unfortunately, she did not manage to say yesterday...

.....two years time of Tory Government, conference imagine going back to those dark days of opposition – listening to the Tories telling us how they're going to fix the public services.

How dare they – talk of crisis now from them, of all people – after eighteen years of Conservative rule they know all about crisis in the NHS, by the time they'd finished the NHS was on it's knees. Lack of investments, poor wages, reduction in nurse and medic training – everyone knew we were at breaking point. Conference that was a crisis.

On 18th April 1997, The Times wrote:

'The much trumpeted special election pledge in Labours' manifest to release £100m from administration to cut hospital waiting lists by 100,000 is a trivial gimmick. As the BMA commented the pledge is "frankly pathetic".

Apart from its £100m pledge, Labour has not promised to spend anymore than the Tories.... but Labour's reluctance to consider increases in taxation (other than the levy on the utilities) and coolness to many efficiency initiatives undermine the party's pledge to deliver a better NHS. Current health policy is mainly vague aspirations and gesture politics. Let's work together to change government policy but lets make sure we challenge the lies and hypocrisy of the Tories. Conference let us not forget.....oppose 76.3

Pat Hetheron, South Birmingham Mental Health