

## Chair's Message



Dear Colleagues,

The razzmatazz of world cup football is over, but the current economic downturn is showing all signs of later than expected recovery!

We understand the adverse affects of the Con-Dem led agenda to cut our public services. The Scottish Black Members Committee believes, as a result of any such move, the probability of a Black Member loosing his or her job is very high!

We also believe the recession provides ideal conditions for the BNP to promote their politics of hate. To address the need to lobby and protect Black people jobs, we aim to move a motion at the forthcoming STUC Black Workers Conference in October.

The tough times are ahead. And we made the right decision to re-elect Dave Prentis as our trade union's General Secretary.

At our National Delegates Conference, Dave Prentis identified the challenges to counter the coalition Government's agenda of pay freezes, job cuts and raids on workers' pensions.

To sail across the difficult times ahead; it is time to forge unity among our ranks and to stand firm behind our UNISON leadership.

We welcome the Equality Act. To enable Black Members to fully benefit from the Discrimination Claims Protocol; developments are taking place in UNISON Scotland and I will be in touch with you about this in due course.

Best Regards  
Ismail Donmez

# BUILD RESISTANCE TO THE ECONOMIC CRISIS TO PROTECT JOBS

The present economic crisis is a threat to the living standards, jobs, and pensions of all working Black Members. In the United Kingdom it is a major concern for Black Members that they are targeted for redundancy in the current economic downturn.



**IT'S NOT JUST THEM THAT COULD GO.**  
IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD'S SECURITY.

Many Black Members are being made redundant through restructuring and re-organisations, within the public sector. The change agenda only serves to heighten Black Members concerns over job security.

As a result, Black Members are facing reduced working hours or losing their jobs which can cause anxiety and long term health impacts. Debt and other financial issues may put quality of life and homes at risk and may contribute to added strain and pressures on families and children's school performance.

Today 11% of the UK population and 8% of the UK's workforce describe themselves as coming from a Black or Ethnic Minority background. Statistics show Black Workers are much more likely to be subject to disciplinary action, redundancies and dismissals.

Because of the discrimination and disadvantage they already face, Black Workers and Communities are being hit especially hard by the financial and economic crisis. Black people will also suffer disproportionately from a public spending cuts, as the public sector is a key employer, and because services and community projects supporting Black people will be particularly vulnerable to cuts.

UNISON the largest public services trade union, fully understands the adverse impact of the present economic crisis, and believes that cut backs to the public service spending will not only put our services and service providers jobs at risk, but also the cut backs will put all our communities at risk too. That is why UNISON has launched "A Million Voices for Public Services" campaign at a national, regional and local community level to make the case for properly funded publicly provided local services.

**DON'T WAIT TILL IT'S TOO LATE – DEFEND PUBLIC SERVICES NOW!**

[www.unison.org.uk/million/](http://www.unison.org.uk/million/)

# DAVE PRENTIS IDENTIFIES NEW CHALLENGES FACING UNISON



Dave Prentis, UNISON General Secretary, in his key note speech at the National Delegates Conference, spoke of the challenges facing UNISON, as the Government unveiled its agenda of pay freezes, job cuts and raids on workers' pensions.

UNISON needed to challenge the Government's nightmare scenarios and grim warnings, designed to demoralise workers and prepare the way for gutting public sector services, an agenda they had never received an electoral mandate to carry out. UNISON had been born to deal with conflict, to represent members during the testing times - and the union was facing the test of a lifetime.

Dave Prentis said: *"All who care about public services are looking to us for leadership. It is a heavy responsibility. But it is the one we will rise to. We are right where we should be. And all of us in this room today, we will look back in years to come and say, I was there, I played my part."*

Dave Prentis also hailed the work being done by UNISON activists, including the work of the Self Organised Groups, who brought their passion and their hard work to increasing the union's diversity.

Turning to the BNP, he spoke of the clear message sent by hundreds of UNISON members and local communities who had worked together to defeat their lies and racial hatred. The battle to consign the BNP and the English Defence League to history had to continue, and Dave Prentis declared that there was no place for fascists in our streets, our councils or in our union. Black delegates at Conference expressed their appreciation of the speech and the priorities it outlined for the coming year.

## Race Discrimination Claims Protocol

Bob Abberley, Assistant General Secretary of UNISON, in a recent meeting with Black Members of UNISON, built their awareness on UNISON's Race Discrimination Claims Protocol.

Bob said that the protocol ensures that Black members complaining of race discrimination are provided with the best representation and support.

The protocol provides regions and members with clear guidance in taking forward race discrimination claims. If a Regional Organiser decided not to proceed with a claim, and the member was unhappy, a request could be made to the Regional Secretary to review the case.

If the member was unsuccessful at this stage, a case conference would be convened involving Black Members as well as the Regional Secretary and representatives from Thompsons.

Even if UNISON decided not to proceed with the case but the member continued, the union would still continue to support the member in the workplace. Bob stressed upon the Black members that it should be UNISON, not Thompsons who were ultimately responsible for decisions on taking on cases.

## DAVE PRENTIS RE-ELECTED

Dave Prentis was re-elected as General Secretary of UNISON and has sent a personal message to members on the challenges ahead:

*"It is a great honour, and a solemn responsibility, to be re-elected to lead this great union through the most challenging period since its creation."*

*"Now more than ever, we need a union that will stand up for fairness, be a voice for the voiceless and hold the powerful to account."*

*"I truly believe that if we move forward together – ignoring those who seek to divide or distract us, focused on delivering for our members and speaking up for our public services – we can come through this period stronger, better organised, and more influential than ever before."*

## NEW UNISON PRESIDENT

Angela Lynes will be UNISON's president for 2010-2011.

Angela is an Admin Officer working for Glasgow City Council.

Congratulations to both Dave and Angela from the SBMG.

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## SBMG AGM

The 2010 Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Black Members Group takes place at the Scottish Parliament Building in Edinburgh on the 13 November from 11.00 am – 2.00 pm. Full details nearer the time but please mark this important event in your diary so that you can attend.

# WORLD CUP 2010

## NOT JUST FOOTBALL BUT A HISTORY LESSON

It was the first World Cup held in Africa and now it is all over. At the closing ceremony, former President Nelson Mandela received a standing ovation from the 95,000 spectators in Soccer City, South Africa. How South Africa has changed!

From the beginning of the 2010 World Cup to the end, significant dates were remembered. June 11 marked not only the opening of the World Cup but it was also the anniversary of the day that Nelson Mandela and his seven comrades were convicted of sabotage in the Rivonia Trial, which ended 46 years ago.

On June 11, 1964, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada, Raymond Mhlaba, Denis Goldberg, Andrew Mlangeni, Elias Motsoaledi and Govan Mbeki were found guilty of sabotage. The following day, the eight men, who had expected the death sentence, were each sentenced to a term of life imprisonment. Goldberg, because he was white, was separated from the group and incarcerated at Pretoria Central Prison. Mandela and the others arrived in the early hours of the morning of June 13 on Robben Island.

Kick-off day also marked the 22nd anniversary of the "Free Mandela" concert held in Wembley Stadium in London on June 11, 1988. The concert was billed as Mandela's 70th birthday concert but was staged to highlight the plight of all political prisoners in South Africa and to call for their release.

The date of the World Cup final on July 11 was also a historic day in the anti-apartheid struggle. On that day in 1963, police raided Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia and made several arrests, including those of Sisulu and Kathrada. Some of the other accused were arrested elsewhere.

Mandela was not among them as he was already a prisoner having been sentenced to five years on November 7, 1962 for leaving the country illegally and inciting workers to strike. Goldberg was released in 1985 and Mbeki in 1987. Sisulu, Kathrada, Mhlaba, Motsoaledi and Mlangeni were released in October 1989 and Mandela was released on February 11, 1990. Source: [www.nelsonmandela.org](http://www.nelsonmandela.org)

Further Reading: [www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/a-tribute-to-scotland-by-the-man-jailed-alongside-nelson-mandela-1.1026385](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/a-tribute-to-scotland-by-the-man-jailed-alongside-nelson-mandela-1.1026385)

## NEW NATIONAL RACE EQUALITY OFFICER



Narmada Thiranagama has been appointed as the new UNISON Race Equality Officer. She has been involved in community and political activism as well as working within the British Trade Union movement.

Before joining UNISON, Narmada was the Women's Equality Policy Officer for the TUC.

Prior to this, she was the Senior Official for Equality and Training at the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT). She brings with her a wealth of skills, experience and knowledge to support Black Members in UNISON. She is delighted to be joining UNISON and looks forward to meeting members.

## Editor's Corner

Lui Giacomello

The attack on Public Services has begun and will continue. Cuts in services will mean cuts in jobs. Public Sector pensions are also under attack.

Don't wait till it's too late to fight back.

Make sure you add your voice to UNISON's 'Million Voices' campaign.

Lui Giacomello is an IT Network Engineer with NHS Lothian.

## THE MISSION

- a life for freedom in South Africa  
by Denis Goldberg



In this memoir, Denis, the perennial optimist, writes about the human side of the often painful road to freedom; about the joy of living, of love and death, human dignity, political passion, comradeship, conflict between comrades.... and a very long imprisonment.

[www.aberdeenshireunison.com/international/denisgoldberg.html](http://www.aberdeenshireunison.com/international/denisgoldberg.html)

## NBMC 2011

The next National Black Members Conference is scheduled to take place on 21<sup>st</sup>- 23rd January 2011 in Glasgow

# National Slavery Memorial Day

The UK will mark National Slavery Memorial Day on 23 August. This day has been set aside as a national day of remembrance for the abolition of the slave trade. It gives us an opportunity to understand the reality and the truth of the slave trade and abolition movement, and reflect on its legacy of racism and inequality.

It also enables us to celebrate the courage of those who struggled for emancipation, reminding us that slavery became unsustainable through the actions of slaves themselves.

UNISON was one of the organisations that called for a national slavery memorial day. UNISON Black Members' Groups in our regions will be discussing how to commemorate this day. More information at: [www.antislavery.org/english](http://www.antislavery.org/english)

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## UNISON INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Read the latest issue online [www.unison.org.uk/file/INLs\\_pring2010.doc](http://www.unison.org.uk/file/INLs_pring2010.doc)

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## UNISON DEBTLINE SERVICE

Payplan provide free, ethical and immediate debt solutions to those in financial difficulty. We work with UNISON welfare to make this free service available to all members.

[www.debtclinic.co.uk/unison](http://www.debtclinic.co.uk/unison)

## ATTACKS ON PUBLIC SECTOR PENSIONS

If society is judged by how we treat our elderly, what does it tell you about this society when pensioners have to go on a campaign to protect their welfare state? 'Defending Public Sector Pensions' has been a priority and we at the SBMG believe the issue is vital for Black Workers.

Black people are already vulnerable to pensioner poverty, with lower pension incomes and savings. Black people are less likely to be in work than White people (60% compared to 76%) and have a higher unemployment rate of 12% for Black people compared to 5% for White people.

Black people are more likely to work part time or be self-employed. For example, 31% of Pakistani and 35% of Bangladeshi people work part time compared to 26% of White people. Around 26% of Pakistani people are self-employed compared to 13% of White people.

As public sector pensions come under increasing threat which makes Black workers even more vulnerable to poverty in old age, the SBMG believe that UNISON must act now in order to save our futures.

## EQUALITY ACT BENEFITS MEMBERS

The Equality Bill has become law following years of discussion and almost 12 months of parliamentary debate. The bill received royal assent on 8 April and formally became the Equality Act 2010. It brings together all existing equality legislation, in most cases strengthening and simplifying the law.

The act should see our membership benefit from: a new socioeconomic duty on public authorities, which means they have to consider how to reduce all disadvantage; the use of public procurement to improve equality; protection against discrimination for carers and a ban on age discrimination outside the workplace.

Scottish Black Members of UNISON are delighted that at the very end of the last parliament, the Equality Bill has finally completed its passage into law.

UNISON campaigned for some elements to be stronger, particularly on equal pay, but this does represent a significant step forward for equality. It extends rights and protections on age and gender reassignment and introduces an extended duty on public bodies to promote equality for all groups.

Scottish Black Members understand that UNISON will continue to lobby for the new equality duty to be robust and enforced.

The current race duty on public bodies, which was introduced as a result of the Stephen Lawrence enquiry, will be integrated into a new single equality duty covering all areas of equality.

The main provisions of the Equality Act come into force in October 2010. The integrated public sector equality duty, the socioeconomic duty and dual discrimination protection come into force in April 2011.

Discrimination in goods and services on grounds of age is banned from 2012 and private and voluntary sector gender pay transparency regulations start in 2013.

Full details of the act are at:

[www.equalities.gov.uk/equality\\_act\\_2010.aspx](http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010.aspx)