

Chair's Message

Dear Readers

Credit crunch, week pound, signs of economic recovery, UNISON busy streamlining its structures, and reviewing the way it funds political parties. And political parties' preparations for the next general elections can well influence a Change in the Government.

Make no mistake ... change is not necessarily a bad thing! Provided we are well prepared to embrace the change. The change we foresee threatens our public services.

We must sign up to the UNISON Scotland's Public Works campaign, to send a simple message across that to cut Public Services in the economic recession is a "Very Bad Idea".

In this edition you will read more about the successful training weekend we had in Edinburgh, black people meeting the Members of the Scottish Parliament, Show Racism the Red Card fortnight of action, and a report from the 13th STUC BW Conference which took place recently in Glasgow.

It has been my pride and privilege to serve the Scottish Black Members. From the bottom of my heart I thank all my colleagues who stood by me when I needed them most. My term of office is about to end.

The Scottish Black Members AGM is just around the corner. The AGM provides you with an opportunity to elect a new working committee, a committee which can influence the policies affecting Black people. See you at the AGM

Respectfully

Hamid Rasheed

I'VE SIGNED MINE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN ME?



Hamid Rasheed

UNISON Scotland has launched its 'Public Works' campaign with the message that public service cuts will increase costs for ordinary families and will delay economic recovery.

"We all need to do our bit to defend public service jobs and services - I've signed mine," says Hamid.

'Public Works' is the Scottish arm of the union's 'Million Voices for Change' campaign. And branches and members need to play their part in getting the message over.

UNISON has warned that the headlong rush to cut and privatise public services will lead to delays in coming out of recession. It has produced a leaflet demonstrating the importance of public services to everyone's lives and pointing to the huge costs that would fall on people if public services were not available.

Matt Smith - UNISON's Scottish Secretary, said " 'A day in the life...' follows an average woman through her day and points out our dependence on public services - from water and sewerage, through environmental health and refuse collection, to education and health care."

"It points out that all of us rely on public services, not just the most vulnerable, for whom they can be a lifeline."

What can you do?

Matt Smith added, "We are keen to involve members in this campaign. After all we are both the front-line providers of public services and the users of public services. Who knows their importance and their values better than us?"

"We are asking you all to sign up individually to the 'Million Voices' campaign at national level. We would also like you to tell us what you do in your job and why it is important. And tell us your own experiences of using public services - how they have supported you and your families."



If you want to see changes that put people before profit and public interest before private greed then add your voice to our campaign.

Add your name:

www.unison.org.uk/million/add.asp

Black Workers Meet MSPs

By Nahid Aslam



To identify barriers faced by the Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) people, in getting involved with in the Scottish political process. An event themed as: "One Scotland - Representation and Participation of Black Workers", took place at the Scottish Parliament on 8 October 2009.

As a result of a healthy debate; three barriers preventing involvement of the Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) in the political process were highlighted:

- The rise of the far-right and in particular the work of the English and Scottish Defence Leagues which are targeting the Muslim communities of the UK
- General prejudice and discrimination in society and in particular the workplace which saps the energy of BME individuals thus dissuading them from actively from getting involved in the community
- 'Lack of appropriate job opportunities for New' immigrants, is preventing from making use of much needed talent, skills and qualifications by the Scottish society.

Tributes were paid, to Bashir Ahmed MSP who died in February this year and to Bill Speirs who died last month, for their contribution towards Black Empowerment and Race Equality.

At the event Black people were encouraged to think about becoming involved in the political process and to take part in forthcoming events and consultations, to help advance race equality.

MSPs from all the major parties took part in the event, to show solidarity with the trade unions and with Black Workers.

The event was chaired by Sofi Talyor (UNISON) and organised jointly by the Migrant Rights Network, the STUC and UNISON Overseas Nurses Network with over 30 Black people taking part.

www.scotlandagainstracism.com

St Andrew's Day Anti Racism March & Rally

Saturday
28th November 2009

The STUC is once again proud to be organising the annual St. Andrew's Day Anti Racism march and rally on Saturday 28 November 2009.

This year, the Anti Racism and Fascism March will assemble at 10.30am at St. Andrew's in the Square, off Salt market, Glasgow, marching off at 11am through the streets of Glasgow to the Glasgow Film Theatre, Rose Street, where there will be a rally with speakers from 12 noon.

As ever, it is vital that this year's event attracts a large turnout, to tackle racist and fascist views, to give a clear demonstration that Scotland stands together against racism, and to celebrate equality and diversity in Scotland.

This year's theme is 'A Future Free From Racism'.

Food and hot snacks to purchase Soft drinks, hot drinks and beverages available from a licensed bar area Music Solidarity stalls and commercial exhibitors Children's games and activities Art displays



Scotland Against Racism!

National Black Members' Conference Registration

If you would like to attend the NBM Conference in Newcastle, 22-24 January 2010, you can apply to your branch to nominate you as either a delegate or a visitor. If you do not have a Black Self Organised Group in your branch, please contact your region. Please note that deadline for registration is Friday, 30 October 2009.

Racism Shown the Red Card



L to R: Kevin Moon; Paul Sheerin; Hamid Rasheed; Derek McInnes – Manager; Councillor Elspeth MacLachlan – Community Safety Partnership; David McPhee – Perth & Kinross Council

The Perth & Kinross branch of UNISON has teamed up with St Johnstone FC, the Community Safety Partnership and the Perth and Kinross Council to sponsor St Johnstone squad posters, as part of the 'Show Racism the Red Card' Fortnight of Action.

The posters were launched on Monday 12 October by Councillor Elspeth MacLachlan from the Community Safety Partnership and Hamid Rasheed of Perth and Kinross branch of UNISON.

The posters will be distributed to the Saints' supporters free before the club's home game against Rangers on Saturday 17 October. Posters will also be handed out to members of the 'Junior Saints' supporters club.

Funding will also be provided to renew sponsorship of a 'Show Racism the Red Card' advertising billboard at St Johnstone's McDiarmid Park stadium.

As part of the Fortnight of Action, St Johnstone youth players will take on Mental Health service users in a game on 20 October. At the end of the fortnight St Johnstone players will 'show racism the red card' prior to their away fixture against Kilmarnock on 24 October.

Hamid Rasheed, Communications Officer for the Perth and Kinross branch / Chair Scottish Black Members of UNISON said: "Challenging racism is at the very heart of UNISON's Policy. Perth and Kinross branch of UNISON, as always, has been more than happy to take part in the 'Show Racism the Red Card event.' We believe that in doing so we are contributing to ensure a bright future free of racism".

Councillor MacLachlan said: "We have worked successfully with St Johnstone previously on a number of 'Show Racism the Red Card' initiatives and we are delighted to support the campaign in this way. The posters and the billboard will provide a highly visible way of ensuring everyone visiting McDiarmid Park is aware that racism will not be tolerated anywhere within Perth & Kinross."

The 'Show Racism the Red Card' Fortnight of Action runs throughout Scotland from 16-31 October 2009. It encourages participation from all sections of the community to celebrate diversity and tackle racism.

A major aim of the Fortnight of Action is to encourage anti-racist actions, events and initiatives taking place throughout the year.

Editor's Corner

Lui Giacomello

Where would we be without our Public Services?

UNISON estimates the average household gets more than £10,000 a year in benefits and public services.

Public delivery provides value for money through economies of scale and stopping shareholders taking profits out of the pot.

A year's domestic waste collection sourced privately would cost around £2,500, and the average cost of a year's education outside the public sector in Scotland is around £8,200.

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

Lui Giacomello is an IT Network Engineer with NHS Lothian.

SBMG AGM

The 2009 Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Black Members Group takes place at the Royal Victoria Hospital Seminar Room in Edinburgh on the 9th January 2010 from 11.00 am – 2.00 pm.

Anyone wishing to attend should complete a Delegate Form and return by Friday 18th December 2009.

Anyone wishing to stand for Scottish Black Members Committee positions must complete the appropriate form and submit it by no later than Friday 18th December 2009.

Any motions for consideration by the AGM must be submitted by no later than Friday 4th December 2009.

IMMIGRATION ADVICE FOR UNISON MEMBERS

Are you a migrant worker from a country outside the European Union?

Do you need advice on immigration issues related to your work situation and right to work in the UK?

UNISON is offering a pilot service that provides free immigration telephone advice to UNISON members who have come to work in the UK from countries outside of the European Union.

UNISON works with the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) to provide this support.

If you have been a member of UNISON for more than 4 weeks and need immigration advice and information, please call UNISON Direct at 0845 355 0845.

Your contact details will be passed on to JCWI Adviser who will call you on a Tuesday, 10-3pm. Make sure you are available at this day and time.

UNISON INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Read the latest issue online www.unison.org.uk/file/autumn09.doc

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

Successful Black Workers Conference in Glasgow By Ismail Donmez

51 delegates and 6 visitors attended from 15 trade unions. Unison was represented by Ravi Nathan, Patricia Agu, Nahid Aslam, Shireen Bonnar, Davina Rankin, Sofi Taylor, Pam Sian, Tina Makedenge, Paul Gupta, Hamid Rasheed, Kashina Kashina, and David Ng Hop.

Sofi Taylor (UNISON) welcomed delegates and Glasgow Councillor, Baillia Gery Leonard welcome us on behalf of Glasgow Council. There were 17 motions to get through and the two submitted by UNISON (No 10: Recruitment of Black members into Unions and No 14: Grant Asylum Seekers the right to work) were well supported by great speeches from the UNISON delegates.

Of special interest was the motion on the BNP and speakers were unanimous in calling for unions to stop BNP and to work to stop racism in Scotland and the UK.

There were a great many excellent speakers at the Conference and we saw 6 stalls from Close the Gap, Hope not Hate Scotland, One Workplace Equal Rights Projects, Scottish Union Learning, Show Racism the Red Card, Thompsons Solicitor and UNISON. The Special Session attracted student speakers as well as those from unions.

We all enjoyed getting down to the important issues of union black members and came away happy that we were together on so many issues. We came away in good heart, determined to fight on all fronts to protect the rights of black workers.

Training Success for Scottish Black Members

By Goulnaz Ali

The Scottish Black Members training weekend successfully took place in Edinburgh, from 25 – 27 September 2009. The purpose of the training weekend achieved was to address the identified training needs of the Scottish Black members in UNISON Scotland.

The tutors Pav Akhtar and Ghulam Rasul Shahzad led the training and provided tutorial inputs to some 12 old and new Scottish Black members.

Goulnaz Ali, a new Scottish Black Member Dundee City Branch said: "It is a great pleasure to be here, having met some wonderful people, as well as learning so much about RRA, Policies and mostly from group interaction."

Martha Magaisa another new Scottish Black Member, from South Lanarkshire Branch praised the tutors as really good and added: "I am very encouraged the way the tutors helped me to take part in each and every training exercise and learn a lot about UNISON.

Hamid Rasheed, Scottish Black Members Chair, said, "This year's training set its focus on extended strands in the Single Equality Bill, issues related to Diversity, and Challenging Racism at Work Place.

"The Scottish Black members thank UNISON officers / support staff, the Scottish Learning and Organising Committee and the Scottish Branches, for their continuing support, which has helped us in organising the Scottish Black Members Training Weekend".