

Time to get equal and make sure candidates know - p3

stuc Glasgow 2007 Congress special

revitalising our public services

scottish council activists bulletin

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Democracy Investment Fairness Excellence Partnership

You VALUE it so VOTE for it. Use your vote on 3 May

by Chris Barter Communications Officer

As UNISON stepped up its campaign to put public services at the top of the election agenda, General Secretary Dave Prentis has called for the elections to focus on public services rather than a constitutional debate.

He told last week's Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) that recent opinion polls made it clear the people of Scotland had identified public services as the most important policy affecting their vote.

Dave praised the increased investment in Scottish services and the rejection of the so-called choice agenda being followed disastrously down South.

"It is important that we refocus the election campaign away from issues of the constitution and towards issues that really matter,

and which recent BBC polls have told us are the most important issue for the Scots electorate - the provision of services on which individuals, families and communities depend, and how those are delivered", he said.

"The Scots electorate have, like UNISON, rejected the argument that it does not matter who delivers their services.

"Indeed it is rather like arguing that it does not matter who is elected on 3 May. It matters a great deal."

Dave pointed out that we developed our current range of public services because of the inadequacies of others to deliver in the past.

Dave also attacked as unacceptable the 'tax fiddle' that has led to Glasgow City Council shifting its cultural and sports services to a private trust.

"I sometimes get confused about the difference between tax avoidance and tax evasion. I



Photo: Alan Wylie

Scots have rejected the argument it does not matter who delivers their services. It is like arguing it does not matter who is elected on 3 May. It matters a great deal. - Dave Prentis

know one is illegal and one is immoral but what Glasgow is doing is unacceptable. That a public body funded through Turn to page 2



Carol Ball and Mike Kirby launch the Local Government manifesto Election campaign steps up a gear

UNISON's election campaign highlighted in the last issue of SiU, has stepped up activity with the start of the campaign proper: PDFs of leaflets featuring key messages for UNISON members - and questions for candidates - are now on the website - www.unison-scotland.org.uk /revitalise and will be being circulated to branches.

They raise three key topics - promoting democratic control, in-house service delivery, and the added value that public services bring to the economy. Two new manifestos have also

been produced. One for the local government elections and one highlighting the importance of public services to protecting the environment. This features members whose jobs are key in protecting our environment.

Both manifestos also have an accompanying leaflet with questions to ask candidates.

Leaflets have been produced to counter the threat posed by the BNP in these elections (see page 3) and specifically ask activists to take part in a day of action against the BNP on 28 April across Scotland.

Quarriers staff vote two to one for strike

UNISON members working for Quarriers, one of Scotland's biggest charities, have voted by two to one to take strike action in their dispute over pay.

The union balloted staff on industrial action after pay talks broke down when Quarriers management offered only 2.5% and refused to target pay rises at the lowest paid. Inflation is currently running at 4.6%.

Members at the charity voted by two to one for strike action and by over three to one to take action short of a strike.

Simon Macfarlane, UNISON Regional Officer said, "This is a magnificent result and clearly demonstrates the strength of feeling amongst our Quarriers members. Our members have shown that poverty pay is no longer acceptable when working for a major Scottish charity.

"Surely now management will get back round the table and start negotiating seriously to achieve a just pay settlement.

"UNISON recognises the financial pressures organisations like Quarriers face. That is why we campaign for the Scottish

Executive and local authorities to fund them on the basis of the true costs to provide the service.

"And through our manifesto to Revitalise Scotland's Public Services we are making this an important election issue.

"However Quarriers can't stick their heads in the sand and blame others whilst continuing to inflict poverty on their staff and their families.

"They need to speak up more for decent funding and reprioritise to ensure that they can pay their staff a decent wage.

"Our members don't work in

social care for financial reward; they do it out of commitment to service users.

"In Quarriers these include some of the most vulnerable in society. But we can't continue to have staff working for Quarriers seeking charity because they themselves are experiencing poverty."

UNISON is still considering what industrial action to take so that members can be effective while ensuring that vulnerable service users are not significantly affected. It is likely the first action will be on 25 April.

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Bartter in Glasgow
2007

Services key to election says Dave Prentis

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taxation should act in this way is appalling. The threat to services is real and the impact on jobs and on those who have devoted their careers to public provision is substantial."

Dave called for public service workers to be fairly paid. "People deliver public services, and we need to recognise and reward the investment they make."

"Public sector pay policy must not be used as a means of underpaying those who deliver for all of us. That is why we welcomed the decision of the Scottish Health Minister to honour the Pay Review Body settlement and not to betray the workers in the NHS - albeit that the original level of settlement was wholly inadequate."

"We reject the market in public services and reassert our belief in public provision by adequately rewarding public service workers."

Scotland's water is not for sale

Scottish Organiser Dave Watson called on the STUC "to send a clear message that Scotland's water is not for sale - privatised or mutualised. The future is a democratically accountable and effective public service protecting one of Scotland's greatest assets".

He highlighted the STUC discussion document prepared by UNISON 'It's Scotland's Water'. This puts the attacks on Scottish Water in its international context with one in five of the world's population without access to clean water.

Dave said "Water is a scarce resource and where there is scarcity the privateers can smell a profit". He went on to set out the pernicious role of the World Bank, IMF and EU in linking development aid to water privatisation.

Thanks to communities fighting back in countries as diverse as Bolivia, South Africa and the Philippines, the privateers are in tactical retreat from the developing world. Instead they are looking to the secure profits provided by the regulatory structures in the developed world - including Scotland.

This means the usual suspects are now promoting privatisation in Scotland - The Tories, CBI and the right wing press. However they have been joined by the Water Industry Commission, led by a former Thatcherite privatisation adviser, who are using public money to promote their political ideology.

The arguments against privatisation are well understood. However, there is a new threat of privatisation by the side door - mutualisation.

The cost of buying out and financing Scottish water's investment programme comes to £billions. The banks who would lend this money will demand control. They will also demand the privatisation of operational services as they did at the only UK mutual, Welsh Water.

Mutualisation will therefore result in a shell 'mutual' company with token customer representation presiding over a wholly privatised industry with most of the cost disadvantages of privatisation.

President Katrina puts services in election focus

UNISON's Katrina Purcell was this year's STUC president and she used her address to underline what people wanted from their parliament at the election.

It was a parliament that served them by delivering improvements in a public service that has "integrity and accountability".

"Public-service reforms should not be about packaging up the so-called profitable bits of services to be auctioned off in a reverse version of e-bay,

where the lowest bid gets the prize," she said.

When it is often fashionable to slate the Scottish Parliament, Katrina pointed to the huge successes of devolution.

A distinct Scottish approach to public services focussing on service delivery not job cuts. A distinctive approach to public health with the smoking ban at its centre.

A distinctive Scottish approach to partnership with unions and the 'memorandum of understanding' producing the



Photo: Alan Wylie

Katrina Purcell, STUC President goods on workers' safety, skills and learning and diversity in the workplace. The parliament had not yet "entered its adolescence" but achievements were

there to be built upon.

Katrina, at 35, is a tad young for an STUC President but the firm but friendly way she chaired an at times difficult Congress, was built on years of union experience in the workplace and as a young member.

"I am not looking retirement in the face like my predecessors", she said. "The future of the trade union movement is my future, not something I am leaving behind."

"It is a future in which I intend to play a full part".

Restore pensions link now and final salary schemes for all, says president



"You seem to do quite a few things better here in Scotland"

Malcolm Cantello, UNISON President

UNISON President Malcolm Cantello won STUC backing for a campaign to urge government to immediately restore the link between pensions and earnings and close the gender pay gap.

And he called for "good-quality, affordable final-salary pension schemes in both the private and public sector."

While welcoming commitments in the Pensions Bill to restore the link, Malcolm warned the delay until 2012 would devalue the state pension in relation to average earnings by at least 6 per cent.

On raising the pension age he said, "Raising the state pension age to 68 is no good if people can't find work beyond the age of 60."

And he called on the government to "restore the link with earnings immediately as well as take action to close the gap between male and female earnings."

Malcolm welcomed the reduction in the number of years required to build a full state pension to 44 years for men and 39 years for women to 30 years for all.

"This means a much larger proportion of

women will qualify for the maximum pension - up to 90% by 2025. But why should women have to wait till then?" he asked.

Turning to the new Scottish Local Government Pension Scheme, Malcolm noted we would soon decide on a new scheme with transitional protection up to 2020 and savings from the Rule of 85 to be put back into the fund.

"This is considerably better than where we are down south. You seem to do quite a few things better here in Scotland", he mused.

Unions demand protection for vulnerable workers

STUC delegates exposed the exploitation faced by vulnerable workers and demanded changes in the law to protect them.

Disabled worker Paul Brown said, "Workers are not vulnerable because they are disabled, immigrant, young or women but because the law fails to protect them from exploitative employers".

UNISON's **Fiona Smith**, speaking for the General Council, warned of the rise in work poverty. "Too many women are employed as home workers with no protection or minimum wage and too many



Fiona Smith

migrant workers are employed below their skill levels and are exploited", she said.

And **Matt Smith** called on the Scottish Executive to set up migrant support working group with unions and community organisations to "tackle issues such as education, language and racism".



Stephen Smellie

UNISON's **Stephen Smellie** laid out the initiatives UNISON has taken like setting up the overseas nurses network and its work on direct payments for personal services for

people with disabilities.

UNISON has initiated a project with disabled peoples' organisations, the Scottish Personal Assistants Employer's Network and UNISON's disabled members' group, to jointly develop guidance for the protection of these workers.

"We are comfortable with direct payments as a way to empower disabled people to recruit, employ and manage their own support services. However, this does leave a pool of vulnerable lone workers and it is important they are well supported and organised", he told the Congress.

UNISON's work with the overseas nurses network, spearheaded by Sofi Taylor, was featured in a video presentation on how trade unions are reaching out to migrant workers. See www.unison-scotland.org.uk and click on Overseas Nurses Network.

Investment and healthy public sector key to manufacturing growth

The government must take urgent action to build investment and training strategies to halt the decline in manufacturing industry.

STUC delegates backed a call for long term support and 'a level playing field' to compete for contracts across Europe.

Seconding the motion from **Community**, UNISON's John Stevenson warned against the myth that the public sector is

'crowding out' private industry.

He told delegates, "Public spending - public investment - stimulates the economy, creates contracts and creates jobs in the public and private sector."

He pointed to UNISON's Adding Value research on public spending in the Scottish economy and welcomed a newly published STUC discussion paper calling for long term strategies.

We had no lessons to learn from those who promoted the 'crowding out' myth. They were the same people who "for 13 years systematically decimated our manufacturing industry", said John.

"The way forward is not cuts in the public sector but investment in skills, infrastructure and a thriving public sector". He called for "investment in research and development and a level playing field for Scottish industry".

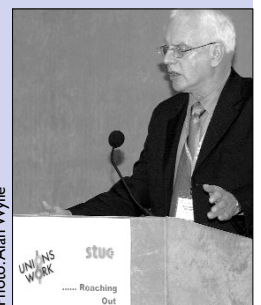


Photo: Alan Wylie

John Stevenson

Statutory pay audits needed in public and private sector

UNISON backed an STUC statement welcoming statutory pay audits in the public sector and calling for the law to be extended to the private sector.

UNISON's Kate Ramsden told delegates, "It has taken more than 30 years to get to the stage we are at now on equal pay.

"Without mandatory pay audits for all, employers will not make

essential progress in the private sector. Low paid women workers deserve that policy commitment".

Kate stressed "the vital role that UNISON and other unions have had in fighting for equal pay.

"We are angry at suggestions from some quarters that unions, along with politicians and employers have somehow let women down or failed them on equal pay issues to date. That attitude is insulting to all of us".

Without trade unions the cause of equal pay would never have been advanced.

"It was the unions that were driving force behind the negotiations on equal pay in the NHS", she said.

She slammed attempts in local government to introduce single status 'on the cheap' and made it clear that, "Where employers will not negotiate acceptable agreements, we will take legal action

and UNISON is currently pursuing thousands of claims for Scottish members in local government and the NHS", said Kate.

Kate demanded the Scottish Executive should fund equal pay in local government in the way commitments were made in Agenda For Change in the Health Service.

UNISON had pointed out to

Without trade unions the cause of equal pay would never have been advanced

Kate Ramsden



Audit Scotland that it should be using its statutory powers to ensure council spending plans comply with equal pay law.

Access to Work must stay

The STUC will campaign against plans to withdraw the Access to Work scheme from public bodies.

The scheme provides vital support to disabled people in employment and its loss would exclude many more disabled people from work.

Julia McIlhannon (UNISON) told delegates that of the 6.8 million disabled people of working age in the UK, only 50% are in work compared to 81% of able bodied people. Their pay is 10% less.

She called for vigilance to ensure that disabled people are not further disadvantaged by moves to restrict access to work.

"Most of the delegates here are able-bodied but this could change and it may be your access that's restricted", warned Julia.

New Culture Bill is a 'missed opportunity'

Unions are to push the Scottish Executive to increase spending on culture to 1% of its budget

Backing an Equity and Musicians Union move, UNISON's John Stevenson welcomed much of the Draft Culture Bill but branded parts of it as a 'missed opportunity', with 'laudable aims' not matched by the fine print. "The watering down of Local Authority duties would mean they would have little or no obligation to actually deliver on the bill's aims", said John. He slammed plans to repeal the 1887 Libraries Act which would, "open the door to living off libraries and museums to pseudo-charitable and unaccountable trusts".

In Glasgow and Edinburgh, trusts already mean "Democratic control and accountability have been replaced by buck passing". He warned that the lack of funding was compounded by complex guidance which could mean community planning projects would never get off the ground.

Time to get equal - and make sure your election candidates do too

A successful launch of the Time to Get Equal Campaign took place on International Women's Day (March 8) at the Scottish Parliament.

Cathie Peattie MSP, Glyn Hawker and Stephanie Herd all spoke at a meeting in the Parliament attended by branch reps and MSPs.

Cathie Peattie was presented with a huge invoice for £800m - being the estimated cost of dealing with equal pay claims from a range of staff who haven't yet been considered - classroom assistants, library workers etc.

She said "The public sector should be setting an example in providing equality-proofed pay. The delays in delivering this have concerned us in the Scottish Parliament and have concerned the EOC.

"All levels of the public sector should accept their responsibility and agree equal pay with unions."

Glyn Hawker called for the Scottish Executive to assist employers - especially in local government - to fund this duty without having to force staff or the public to pay for it, and Stephanie urged branches to use the forthcoming elections to raise the issue - both with council can-



Photo: Pascal Saez

didates and with prospective MSPs.

TARGET your candidates

New material is available in the Campaign Pack on the Equal Pay portal - www.unison-scotland.org.uk/equalpay. Template letters for branches to use to lobby both council candidates and prospective MSPs have been added to the pack.

Based on a letter devised by Aberdeen City Branch, they provide the ammunition for stewards in branches to approach members, getting them to submit them (either directly or via the branch) to candidates.

The different target candidates

reflect the different campaigning priorities of branches because of their different situations.

Glyn Hawker also suggests that branches could introduce the topic into hustings - either organised by the branch or by outside bodies.

"It's a good idea to raise this issue with candidates at hustings", she said, "Or indeed arrange hustings yourself.

"As long as you ensure you invite all the main contesting parties in whichever election you are targeting, then these events can be paid for from branch funds without breaching the election legislation."

Stopping the BNP during the elections

by Kevin O'Neil

Information Development Officer

On Thursday 3 May, you will have the chance to exercise your democratic right to vote for the candidates and the party you want to run your area.

UNISON wants to make clear to members and the public the dangers posed by the British National Party (BNP) who have announced for the first time that they will contest every regional list in the forthcoming Scottish Parliament elections. They will put up 32 candidates and seven local government candidates.

The BNP masquerade as a mainstream political party, but they hide their true colours. They are only too keen to exploit fears, frustrations and people's desire for a better Scotland, in order to further their extreme views.

They say that they are a proper political party. The evidence

against them says they are not.

They divide communities and when this happens, jobs are lost and businesses close. They want black people, refugees and even migrant workers from Europe to leave Britain. They would even stop mixed-race relationships if they were given the chance.

The list system provides an opportunity for election with a fairly low threshold and uses the freeport system, provided by public money, to promote their message of hate cost effectively.

Whilst fascist parties like the BNP have a minimal footprint in Scotland, we must continue to campaign to ensure that this position remains.

Know the facts

Racism flourishes when it is unchallenged and it has no place in our workplaces and communities. The lies spread by the BNP must and will be answered.

The Policy and Information

Team has produced a range of materials for members, activists and branches to use in stopping the BNP.

On Saturday 28 April, UNISON Scotland will be holding an anti BNP Day of Action across Scotland. This will take place from 12:00 to 2:00pm in the form of street stalls and distributing leaflets at various locations across Scotland.

If you are able to assist with this day of action or require materials for your own activity, please contact Kevin O'Neil (k.oneil@unison.co.uk 0870 777 006) Information Development Officer at UNISON House who is co-ordinating the Day of Action.

As UNISON members and public service workers, we care for the whole community. Don't let the racists ruin Scotland. Use your vote to Stop the BNP and their message of hate.

Action to end mental health discrimination

The STUC will campaign to combat discrimination on the grounds of mental health and will ensure that union reps have the knowledge and skills to negotiate policies in the workplace to support and retain members with mental health difficulties.

Supporting the move, UNISON's Lilian Macer told delegates that one in four Scots has experienced a mental health problem. She welcomed innovations to treat people in the community but added that this requires considerable additional staffing and an appropriate staff mix.

"UNISON is not convinced that NHS boards have in place the provision that will support our members with mental health problems to gain and retain employment within the Scottish workforce and more needs to be done", she said.



Lilian Macer

Bring back FE national bargaining

The STUC backed calls for a return to national bargaining in the Further Education sector and laid down a marker that it would not accept top-up fees in Scotland.

Speaking in the Further and Higher Education debate, UNISON's Sheena Grant said, "Individual bargaining on pay and conditions with 43 colleges not only fragments the sector, it does nothing to improve best practice".

Sheena slammed the reluctance of the Association of Scottish Colleges to develop good practice across the sector.

"This is especially worrying given the major issues around equal pay", she said.



Sheena Grant

Nominations sought for The Zero Tolerance Awards of 2007

For the first time **UNISON Scotland** is sponsoring one of the Awards made by The Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust.

These celebrate women who have made a significant contribution to the voluntary or public sector in terms of highlighting the

issues surrounding domestic abuse, and campaigning to end all forms of violence against women and children.

The Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust is seeking nominations for three awards:- The team award, sponsored by UNISON. Woman of the Future Award - sponsored

by EIS. The Kathy Kerr Lifetime Achievement Award - kindly sponsored by Scottish Women's Aid, Sassie and Rape Crisis Scotland.

The nominations for these awards should be in by the 30 April 2007. If you or your branch has someone, or a team who you

think is worthy of nomination, please follow the instructions on the website (below). The awards will be announced in May.

For more information on the event, the criteria and entry form please visit <http://www.zerotolerance.org.uk> or contact Sonia Leal on 0131 624 8955.

UNISON pushes members' role in Education

While increased spending was welcomed, the STUC called for more investment in education.



UNISON's Pat Rowland highlighted the Equal Opportunities Commission investigation into the "shockingly low pay" of classroom assistants.

She also backed plans for career progression for early years professionals and outlined that UNISON is still pushing for a national pay structure for nursery nurses.

Education group

UNISON members working in education have agreed to set up an Education Issues Group to focus on and support the wide range of members delivering education services in Scotland.

Called by the Scottish LG Group, the detail of its structure will be out soon. See next issue and website for details.

Invest in elderly care

Local authorities must commit to upgrading residential establishments, improve training and ensure private homes are strictly monitored, UNISON's Sam McCartney told the STUC.

"There is an alarming trend for local authorities to opt out of residential care for the elderly", said Sam. Less than 15% of places are provided by councils or the NHS.

"UNISON believes the STUC must campaign for increased public spending on older peoples services", added Sam.

cratic trade union movement", he said. UNISON is providing training support to Iraqi unions.

Lift Cuba blockade

Cubans must be allowed to decide the Cuban future and not the USA through international boycotts, UNISON's Jane Carolan told the STUC.

As Cuba's economy revives through partnerships with Venezuela and other countries, the US boycott has intensified to the extent that the American Hilton hotels group was turning away Cuban nationals in the UK.

The US blockade "denies basic goods and services to Cuban people", said Jane. "We need to demand that our government demands the end of the boycott"

Invest in social housing

The government cannot claim to be tackling inequality until it puts housing back at the heart of economic and social policy.

This was UNISON's Jane Carolan's message to the STUC in the housing debate.

"Housing stock transfer rejection is a victory. A tenants' victory", said Jane. "Starting with the Edinburgh ballot there has been a domino effect across Scotland - the rejection of the transfer option".

But victories don't come easy, Jane reminded delegates. Councils had unlimited publicity budgets. While union activists and tenants can't match the resources, "they have something councils don't - commitment!" said Jane.

"Affordable social housing has been neglected too long", said Jane as she called on the government to respect tenants' choice and allow councils the same cash to invest in housing.

"That's what Scottish tenants have proved they want. So if you meet any candidates on the campaign trail, you might want to ask them where they stand on that", added Jane

Replacing Trident could cost 3,000 jobs For humanity's sake, say no to Trident, says Matt Smith

Matt Smith, Scottish Secretary of UNISON, condemned the Government decision to replace Britain's Trident nuclear fleet and pointed to a recent report that demolishes the claims that failing to replace Trident would lead to job losses.

Speaking at the STUC Congress in Glasgow, he said "The STUC and Scottish CND have put forward a detailed report on replacing Trident.

"This has destroyed arguments about job loss should Trident not be replaced and in fact points to the job losses which will occur if it is replaced.

"Trident replacement will be a high draw on the nation's finances. This is not funded from the Defence Budget but from general revenue expenditure. This cost is not met by building fewer warships or tanks.

"It is funded by providing fewer public services or in our welfare provision. Replacing Trident could put at risk up to 3,000 Scottish jobs."

Matt went on to say that Trident is costly, unnecessary and unjustifiable but it is more than an argument about costs. "Even if Trident were delivered gift

wrapped and free we should still reject it." he said.

"How can it be right for the UK to not only retain a nuclear warfare system but also to replace it when we tell others that they must stay out of the arms race? Former UN Nuclear Weapons Inspector Hans Blicks has said 'So long as any State has nuclear weapons other will want them, and so long as any such weapons remain there is risk that they will one day be used by design or accident'.

"And such use would be catastrophic."

"That is the argument", said Matt. "Not the cost. Not the arms race. Not defence. But basic simple humanity. For humanity's sake, say no to Trident".

Matt called for campaigning to continue against replacing Trident, and for others to follow the lead of Scottish MPs a major-



Matt Smith at the STUC Congress

ity of whom voted to scrap the weapons.

● At a rally in February organised by Scotland's 4 Peace, and SCND, - both backed by UNISON, Matt shared a platform with Cardinal Keith O'Brien from the Catholic Church in Scotland, Alan McDonald the Moderator of the General Assembly and politicians from across the political spectrum in calling on the Government to 'Bin the Bomb'.

Support resistance on both sides, Israel and Palestine

UNISON spearheaded a call at the STUC for increased efforts by the UK to take forward the Middle East peace process in line with UN Security Council resolutions.

Reiterating the call for Israeli withdrawal from Palestine, UNISON's Mike Kirby said, "We say to Britain, Europe and the USA, you cannot pick and choose UN resolutions".

Mike pointed to the human cost. 152 people have been killed in Gaza this year, including 10 children. 988 have been wounded, including 68 children.

In occupied Palestine 162,000 public service workers have not been paid for 11 months - the same number as all the UNISON members in Scotland.

"Why?", asked Mike. "Because the US and Europe have blocked payments to the Palestinian Authority because the



Mike Kirby

people of Palestine have exercised their democratic right to elect a government of their choosing.

"We must wish the new unity government well. Hamas with whatever policy is part of that government. It is not the government", added Mike.

The EU, Israel, US and British governments had no right to "impose a collective punishment" on the people of Palestine by withdrawing funds.

But the effects are also felt in

Israel and there is resistance in Israel. Municipal workers striking because they've not been paid. The war economy means 20% of Israelis are below the poverty line.

Mike spoke of an "Enough!" conference recently where a farmer from the West Bank whose land has been taken by the 'wall', urged everyone "to support the resistance on both sides - in Israel and in Palestine - against the occupation.

And an Israeli ex-pilot said, "Without pressure, without sanctions, we have no chance to end the occupation to end the mutual suffering of all the people. After many years, I eventually learned to say 'no'".

Mike called for twinning with PGFTU unions and to explain our position to Israeli trade unions.

Support Iraqi unions

The STUC will call for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq and