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Conference comes to sunny Glasgow

by John Stevenson SiU Editor

Over 2,000 UNISON delegates, staff and visitors from all over the UK will descend on Glasgow's SECC in June for the union's national conference.

Normally held in Brighton or Bournemouth, the annual conference is UNISON's supreme policy-making body.

Each branch can send delegates, based on membership, and can put motions to the Conference which will run from 21-24 June.

Local Government, Transport, Water, Energy and Police will hold their own service group conferences on the days immediately preceding the main conference.

"It is almost 15 years since one of the partners which formed UNISON had their main conference in Glasgow", said UNISON Scottish Convenor Mike Kirby.

"We know many delegates will already have been here for service group and self organised group conferences and we now look forward to welcoming them all to the main conference".

First Minister Jack McConnell will formally welcome delegates and Cathie Jamieson, Minister for Justice and Labour Deputy Leader will speak on the Scottish



The Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre (SECC) will host this year's Conference

parliament agenda. As usual, Scotland will be cohosting the International Rally on Monday night, giving delegates a chance to hear trade union and labour movement guests from around the world and discuss issues with them.

During the week, honorary membership will be given to Aung San Suu Kyi, the elected president of Burma, following an Edinburgh motion last year.

The main issues

Scotland always plays a major part in debates and organisation at Conference and this year is no exception with several issues from Scottish branches being prioritised for debate. "A lot of what we expect from a third term New Labour Government was included in the Warwick Agreement between Labour and the unions and this will be underlined throughout the week", explained Mike Kirby.

"The challenge will be to secure delivery and engage to influence the debate on the future of public services, as determined by the UK government, devolved administrations and Europe."

• Organising and Recruitment is a top priority, with plans for organising for growth around key campaigns. The vital job of encouraging members to become shop stewards is developed by Edinburgh City Branch. A motion from Greater London on organising migrant workers would build on the work pioneered in Scotland with the Overseas Nurses Network. • Pensions provide the largest single raft of motions. Scotland seeks greater worker participation and control of pension funds. There will also be a presentation on the American trade union experience. • Improved representation: The challenge of responding to the changing shape of public services includes Scottish Water's call for a transportable membership.

• Bargaining Motions tackling discriminatory pay systems, of gender, race and age are addressed with the Scottish cities calling for increases in National

masking further privatisation."

ued failure of the BNP in

order to get a toe-hold in

Scotland.

be important"

And he welcomed the contin-

The attempts of the racist

BNP to stir up trouble in areas in

Scotland have so far been unsuc-

cessful but we must continue to

be vigilant. The willingness of

mainstream parties to play on

people's worst instincts in rela-

tion to race is worrying. That's

why UNISON's anti-racism cam-

paign (see Page 3) continues to



A lot of what we expect from a third term New Labour Government ... will be underlined throughout the week 9 Mike Kirby

Minimum Wage targets (although this was consulted on prior to a submission to the Low Pay Commission) and an increase in paternity leave pay. West Dunbartonshire has a motion on Human Rights.and Glasgow Health, Highland LG and others have amendments on the agenda.

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Third term call for continued investment in public services

by Chris Bartter Communications Officer

UNISON Scotland welcomed the Labour victory in the General Election but called on the new government to recognise the reasons for the cut in their majority.

Matt Smith, Scottish Secretary, said, "We're pleased that we can continue to work with Ministers in Westminster and Edinburgh to ensure continued investment in Scotland's public services, and to deliver the Warwick Agreement."

The Warwick agreement comprises a range of policies agreed by the Labour Party and trade unions, including; extending protection for public service workers; fairness at work, including more family friendly rights; tackling unequal pay in the public sector; TUPE style protection for pensions in transfers and much more.

UNISON is clear that there are still a number of issues to

resolve with the Labour Government - especially public sector pensions; the reform of public services and improving workers' rights - especially in the areas of low pay and help for families. Matt said, "The cut in

Matt said, "The cut in Labour's majority was down to the effect of the Iraq War and the perceived privatisation agenda of the Westminster Government. Scottish Ministers would do well to note this latter factor. What people want is good local services not false notions of 'choice'

The EU Constitution and a NO vote

Britain could face a referendum on the EU Constitution in less than a year, and many trade unionists are beginning to look at the detail of the deal on offer for the first time.

As the chair of UNISON's policy committee, the Constitution has been on my desk for a while longer and we have been having an internal debate on the key issues we face. As a result the NEC have placed the issue on the Conference Agenda recommending that the union takes a "NO" position

This is a discussion to be had about public services, trade, the economy and our role in the world I think this is a serious discussion one in which we will inevitably find trade unionists and Labour supporters on both sides of the fence.

The problem that I, as a UNISON member, have with the EU Constitution is that it takes powers away from the people we elect, and gives them to EU institutions where democracy is far too weak and, incidentally, institutions where the Right currently dominate.

Under the Constitution, the EU Commission gains new powers to influence our spend-

ing on public services. Peter Mandelson as Trade Commissioner is given new powers over the EU's internacy should be made by elected politicians with regard to prevailing circumstances: however the Constitution tightens the

UNISON NATIONAL

Minister has just ruled out membership of the euro for another Parliament

The French debate on the EU Constitution appears, from this side of the Channel, to be remarkably similar to the debate in Britain

> On the 'no' side there are trade unionists and Labour voters saying 'no' to a liberal Europe in which ordinary people are excluded. But on the 'yes' side

there aren't positive arguments, just negative campaigning.

People who do not want this Constitution are told that they are the only ones in Europe to call for a rethink. 'No' campaigners in Sweden are told they are alone in Europe. The same happens to Danish 'no' campaigners, and those in the Netherlands too. But we cannot all be alone.

The smears and the spin won't work now. The EU Constitution is bad deal for the labour movement That's a good enough reason to vote 'no' and demand something better.



Pauline Grant

for) pay inequalities. Later on the Monday, **Bob Revie** (Local Government) congratulated UNISON members for their vote to strike over pensions. Moving the composite on public sector pensions he called for a clear Scottish mechanism allowing public sector workers to influence the future of

STUG 2005 UNISON IMPACT

LEADS SCOTTISH

by Chris Bartter Communications Officer

UNISON made a considerable

impact at the shortened STUC

From pensions to poverty pay,

from the UK economy to Iraq,

UNISON speakers were key to

Congress in Dundee last month.

UNIONS

most debates.

Pauline Grant

(UNISON National

action to tackle (and pay

their pensions scheme. That same day Sofi Taylor (NEC) seconded a motion on mainstreaming black workers in trade unions, pointing out that recruitment in this group was vital to break down institutional racism and for the future of the TU movement itself.

Tuesday was the turn of Scottish Secretary, Matt Smith who used support for a large composite on the economy to put UNISON's view that the public sector far from being a drain on growth - actually was

Matt Smith

a key economic generator. "Public sector workers contribute not just their services, but their taxes and spending power. And public sector spending greatly assists the private sector," said Matt.

Mike Kirby (Scottish Convenor) spoke on a motion on the socalled 'Efficient Government' proposals, to challenge the Scottish Executive to match its promises of better public services with the Treasury targets of cuts

in public sector jobs. Finally Angela Lynes (NEC) seconded a motion on Iraq, calling for a precise timetable to be set for troop withdrawal, and for



with the Iradi Federation of Trade Unions to build capacity and solidarity.

Many other delegates made significant contributions on Education, Housing, Violence, Sectarianism and The State Pension, cementing UNISON's lead role in Scotland's trade union movement.

Scottish Water Branch adapts fast to meet challenges around £550m per year. To

by David Wilkinson Chair UNISON Scottish Water

Pressure to cut operat-ing costs by the Water Industry Commission and changes to legislation that UNISON mean members in the Scottish Water Industry are having to adapt fast to a changing industrial landscape.

The branch faces twin challenges of private competition and joint venture working.

Branch Secretary, Stephan Walker said, "Our aim in all of this is to work with Scottish Water and partner companies to protect our members' jobs

and terms and conditions; and help make sure that Scottish Water continues to be a successful and sustainable business"

The recent Water Services (Scotland) Act demands that Scottish Water must, set up an entirely separate retail company (Scottish Water Retail) by 1st April 2006, to provide water and wastewater services to all their commercial customers. From April 2008 this service will be opened up to external competition from private retailers.

Competition does not apply to domestic customers, and since there will be no common carriage of water, all customers will continue to receive water from Scottish Water as they do at present. However, the effect on staff will certainly be significant.

UNISON has already been involved in wholesale/retail splits in the energy sector and that experience has shown that those most affected are in the customer-facing areas. The Minister has already stated that he will issue a TUPE transfer order to transfer key staff across to the new business.

At the same time, Scottish Water is delivering an investment programme worth

facilitate this, the organisation has set up a joint venture, Scottish Water Solutions, partnering companies such as United Utilities, Thames Water and KBR. Participating in this joint

venture has been a major culture shock for our members. Branch members and representatives have had to adapt to new ways of working, promoting members' interests within the partnership while securing future employment by efficiently delivering the current programme. Branch website:

www.unisonscowater.freeuk.com

Opportunity to 'level the playing field' in voluntary sector provision

UNISON called for Communities Minister Malcolm Chisholm to use a Scottish Executive Debate on the Voluntary Sector and the Social Economy to begin to tackle the real issue that affects the Community and Voluntary Sector.

The sector which employs over 100,000 people in Scotland and continues to grow by around 5% a year, has been the subject of a number of independent studies which conclude that there is a growing funding crisis in the sector. Matt McLaughlin, UNISON's Regional Organiser for the Scottish Voluntary Sector, said,

"Obviously UNISON welcomes this debate in the Scottish Parliament, I only hope that the Minister uses this opportunity to take positive action that tackles the growing funding crisis.

"Too often, funding from government is inadequate to deliver the full quality of service that Scottish people deserve. UNISON members need action to tackle the low pay and long hours culture, not warm words and platitudes."

The Community and Voluntary Sector in Scotland is bigger than the manufacturing sector, with staff providing a wide range of services; from caretaking in the local community to providing social care and advice for some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Matt added, "Many social care providers are providing services that Local Authorities cannot or do not want to provide. It is not unusual for voluntary sector workers and NHS/council staff to work side by side with the same client group - and they can often be paid less for the same job.

"UNISON believes that Community and Voluntary Sector providers should be paid the full cost of providing the quality of service expected of them and workers should be paid at rates comparable to their local authority and health colleagues. The Scottish Executive can make this happen if they have the will."



choice

in member states.

It is important that we focus

on the Constitution, not on the

issue of our membership of the

EU itself, as some 'yes' cam-

paigners suggest. It is not a

Constitution and "unfettered

capitalism". Europe will not

collapse if the UK votes 'no'.

have been used before in

debates on the EU_Remember

how we were told that millions

of jobs were at risk if we did-

n't sign up to the single cur-

rency? We now have growth

and jobs, and the Prime

Scare stories of this type

between

the

to spending more on defence and it would also have big implications for civil liberties, with powers such as intelligence gathering for security agencies - Perhaps that's why Condoleezza Rice recently announced that if she had a

on

tion

vote she would vote 'yes'. The problem is that most of the Constitution consists of policy articles laying out what EU policy will be - not, as you would expect in a constitution, just how the system works. Policy should be up for debate in a democratic political process - not set in stone by a Constitution.

In particular economic poli-

Anti-Racism campaign shifts up a gear The

by Chris Bartter Communications Officer

ollowing the successful launch of the Asylum Seekers project (see last moths SiU) UNISONS cotland's Anti-Racism strategy has led to three other initiatives announced recently.

Widely reported has been the launch of the UNISON Scotland book and leaflet detailing The Asylum Myths.

This outlines and demolishes most of the misconceptions put about by both racist parties like the BNP and unfortunately too often by the UK media.

The booklet also outlines some of the organisations that use racism to whip up fear and gain political advantage.

Dave Watson, UNISON Scottish Organiser -Policy said, "The Anti-Racism strategy has three strands - campaigning against racist parties at election time; combating the kind of unconscious racism we read every day in some of the papers and making contact with communities who experience the problems of racism to support them. These

activities fall into these categories."

During the General Election one of these parties attempted to gain a toehold in Scottish politics. The BNP stood two candidates in Glasgow trying to whip up trouble in Glasgow North East (that includes Sighthill) and standing against Mohammed Sarwar MP in Glasgow Central.

UNISON printed 5,000 leaflets for distribution to our members in Glasgow exposing the real nature of the BNP candidates and urging members to use their vote to stop the BNP.

Community links

Another strand of the strategy is to make links between UNISON and some of the communities experiencing racism.

To that end we are planning to have a presence at some of the multicultural festivals organised in different parts of Scotland. Kevin O'Neil (UNISON Information Development Officer) said.

"We will have a stall, and are sponsoring a workshop at the North Glasgow International Festival in Springburn on lune 4. We are also looking at taking part in the Edinburgh and Glasgow Melas - although maybe not this year in each case.

We are looking for members to assist with this type of work - staffing stalls, identifying other events to become involved in and things of this nature."

Kevin on 0870 7777 006 k.oneil@unison.co.uk



Myth

Working

Auchinleck stands against racism

Proving that Showing Racism the Red Card is not just for the SPL, South Ayrshire Branch's John Kerr (far left) and Campbell Peden (far right) meet Auchinleck Talbot Officials prior to the sponsorship of the junior team's match on 14 May.

The branch sponsored the match as part of UNISON's antiracism campaign. (The BNP stood a candidate in Auchinleck at the last council elections). The branch used campaign materials from Show Racism the Red Card.

Argyll & Clyde closure slammed

NISON has slammed the Scottish Executive's decision to abolish Argyll and Clyde Health Board as distracting, divisive and demoralising.

"This is the wrong decision being made at the wrong time and will have a detrimental effect on both patients and staff", said Jim Devine, Scottish Organiser of Health for UNISON.

"It will distract staff away from their primary function - to deliver patient care services. It is divisive because depending literally on which ward a nurse may work could determine that person's new employer. The Health Minister's announcement could paralyse service change for nearly half-amillion Scottish people whilst they have to go through a formal consultation process.

"Last, but not least, this plan will demoralise over 10,000 staff working in Argyll and Clyde. If you are a manager or an aspiring manager, what chance does your future career have, if on your CV it states that you worked in the only Health Board in Britain to be abolished by Government dictat since the NHS was created in 1948?

'Basic industrial relation matters will have to be negotiated with the trade unions and will take months to process. Thirteen months after the last restructuring in the Scottish Health Service, UNISON is still negotiating throughout Scotland on its impact.

"If this is a covert strategy to writeoff debt then this should just be done without the disruption. Professor David Kerr is about to report on the future of the Scottish Health Service. Where will that leave the Minister if Professor Kerr's report offers contradictory advice about NHS structures?

"One gets the feeling that the calls for abolition have not been fully thought through and that the Labour MSPs who have championed the demise of Argyll and Clyde Health Board may be singing a different tune when in two years time the electorate have to travel to Inverness or Glasgow to influence their NHS", railed Jim.

Broad welcome for interim Social Work report

Members of UNISON Scotland's Social Work Issues Group have given a broad welcome to the interim report of the Scottish Executive's 21st Century **Review Group.**

UNISON is represented on two of the sub-groups and this has ensured that members' views and experiences are kept to the fore in the discussions.

The Social Work Issues Group was holding its third Social Work Conference on 24 May just as the interim report was published.

Euan Robson, Scotland's Deputy Minister for Education and Young People was to attend to give a presentation and listen to members' concerns.

'We were pleased to see that the concerns identified in the report closely reflect what our members in the front-line have been telling us for some time,' said Stephen Smellie, Chair of the Social Work Issues Group.

"However, despite all these difficulties, we know that there is a lot of excellent practice out there, and it was good to see that this was recognised too.

Consultation

The report is based on consultation with a range of service users and front-line staff. It recognises that, over the years, social work has become increasingly complex, with new legislation and policy initiatives, greater specialisation, increased social problems around drug misuse and mental health, and improved user involvement.

The report also identifies a



practice recognised. Stephen Smellie

number of concerns which make it difficult for staff to fulfil their role, including too much bureaucracy, risk averse management cultures and unhelpful and blaming responses by the media and the public to what the report somewhat euphemistically calls "untoward incidents." It makes some important points about the



Need climate of openness rather than blame. Kate Ramsden

type of leadership and management needed to empower social work staff to practice to a high professional standard, and another sub-group has been set up to take this forward.

"I was reassured that the report recognised that some parts of social work are high risk, and that sometimes, with the best will and the best practice in the world, children and vulnerable adults will be injured or will die," said Kate Ramsden, Social Work Issues Group member.

"Obviously it is terrible for all concerned when something like this happens. However, research shows that going into defensive mode, and adding new layers of procedure and bureaucracy doe not work, but adds to a risk averse culture which inhibits professional autonomy and accountability.

"As a profession, we need to be able to learn from such tragedies in a climate of openness rather than blame," she added.

UNISON will continue to be involved in the work of the 21st Century Review, and will continue to highlight the issues raised by members.

Gearing up for the G8 Summit

UNISON is gearing up for the G8 Summit and Make **Poverty History events** in July, with a major role in the biggest event on 2 July (see box).

This is a key campaigning year for international development campaigners. Events in 2005 include: hosting of the G8 Summit in June, in Scotland; UK holds the Presidency of the European Union; 20th anniversary of Live Aid concert; The Commission for Africa

Campaigning organisations and charities, such as Oxfam, Christian Aid, ACTSA, SCIAF and the World Development Movement, have identified how they can campaign together to urge the UK Government to commit to the following policies, all of which UNISON has called for in the past:

- Drop the Debt
- Trade justice
- More and Better aid

Demonstration/Rally Edinburgh 2 July

UNISON Scotland has agreed to support the mobilisation for the event in Edinburgh on 2 July

Key events on 2 July are:-· Forming a giant human white band around Edinburgh, challenging the G8 to take action

· Sending messages directly to the G8 on two storey high MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY letters

· Hearing campaigners from across the globe sending a clear challenge to the G8

UNISONScotland's International Committee reports on Make Poverty History and other international initiatives

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY.ORG

"Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.

"The G8 leaders, when they meet in Scotland in July, have already promised to focus on the issue of poverty, especially in Africa. I say to all those leaders: do not look the other way; do not hesitate. Recognise that the

world is hungry for action, not words. Act with courage and vision

'Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom.

"Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom. Of course the task will not be easy. But not to do this would be a crime against humanity, against which I ask all humanity now to rise up.

"Make Poverty History in 2005. Make History in 2005. Then we can all stand with our heads held high."

Nelson Mandela

Members should keep in touch with their Branch International Officer to find out how they can participate.

UNISON's Scottish Council also supports the G8 Alternatives coalition and the blockade of Faslane on 4 July organised by Scottish CND and Trident Ploughshares.

Twinning with Cuba In November last year Mike

Kevin O'Neil Information

Development Officer (Secretary

of Scottish Welfare Committee)

and Alison McGimpsey. Lothian

Health Branch are taking part in

the Cvcle USA challenge - 300

These

fundraising

Kirby, Scottish Convenor, arranged a visit to Scotland of a Cuban trade unionist from a Health Workers' union.

UNISON Scotland welcomed the opportunity to discuss closer links between UNISON Scotland and that union (SNTS) in the Holguin region.

As a first step, a draft protocol for a Twinning Agreement has been produced and an initially favourable response has been received.

Emailing List

Emails covering a range of international trade union/social justice issues are received by UNISON Scotland. It is possible to forward these. If you would like to go on our email list please contact Michael MacNeil with vour email address.

Contact Box

If you would like to know more about any of UNISON's international work, please contact:

Michael MacNeil

Secretary - UNISON Scotland International Committee UNISON House 14 West Campbell Street G2 6RX 0800 7777 006 M.Macneil@unison.co.uk www.unisonscotland.org.uk/international

G8 CALL FOR UNISON SUPPORT

UNISON is likely to have two major roles at the G8 demonstration and rally in Edinburgh on July 2. We are likely to be in charge of the stewarding of the demonstration and we also have (at least one) stall at the celebration afterwards.

We are looking for activists and members to volunteer to assist with either (or both) jobs. Please contact Michael Macneil at West Campbell Street.

m.macneil@unison.co.uk.

UNISON needs your knowledge

We have thousands of members with special knowledge on a range of issues affecting public services and we need that to make sure UNISON's voice is heard in the Scottish Parliament. The union has set up Policy Pools so we can respond to the hundreds of consultations issued by the Scottish Executive. We want to hear from any member with special knowledge on any of the issues.

Check on all new consultations at www.unison-scotland.org.uk/ briefings/parliament.html

New Central shopfront for UNISON



The New Office for the Central Resource Centre is a shopfront premises in Alloa

The Office, open since February, provides a resource back up for seven local branches - Falkirk and Stirling Local Government, Forth Valley and Fife Health, SEPA, Scottish Water and Capability Scotland Branches.

The Administrator is Barbara Slater and the address is 6. Shillinghill, Alloa FK10 I JT tel no 01259 220830.

Support them in the UNISON Welfare challenges 2005

by Kevin O'Neil Secretary Scottish Welfare Cttee

NISON Activists and staff in Scotland are doing their bit to support challenges being organ-

ised this year by UNISON Welfare.

Eileen Dinning Equalities Scottish Officer, Doreen Kean former secretary of the Scottish Welfare Committee (now development worker for the Scottish Pensioners Forum) and Olivia Dewar, Branch Welfare Officer Falkirk Branch. are taking part in the Pyrenean Challenge, a 30-mile hike in three days walking from France to Spain. (22 to 26 September 2005).

To take part in this challenge Eileen, Doreen and Olivia have to raise £785.00



Doreen Kean

said 'Pyrenees'!

UNISON Welfare to support the Bucket and Spade Appeal. Despite the huge growth in tourism a quarter of the UK's population, including many families

with children, are excluded from taking a holiday. They include families whose poor financial circumstances are compounded by illness. bereavement. domestic violence, bad No. editor. they housing and many other

UNISON FIFE UNISON FIFE Fife Branch present Kevin O'Neil with his first £500 sponsorship. (lr) Eleanor Haggett, Chair, Scottish Welfare Committee; Linda Erskine, Branch Secretary; Kevin; Steve Murray, Branch Chair.

problems. Proceeds from the events will go specifically to help such families benefit from a holiday in the UK.

All of the sponsorship money raised will go to UNISON WEL-FARE and none of it is used to subsidise the cost of the trip.

The Bucket and Spade Appeal is aiming to raise £150,000. Please support these participants and UNISON Welfare by sponsoring them.

Should you or your branch wish to sponsor one (or more) of these participants then please O'Neil contact Kevin Information Development 0870 7777 Officer: 006, k.oneil@unison.co.uk

Earlier this year, the Scottish Welfare Committee organised the 'Walk the Loch' for this same appeal. The event has so far raised around £2,500.

We want to hear your news

Won any deals or cases for members? Any 'people' stories we could use? SiU is your paper, we want to hear your stories. Your SiU contacts are:

John Stevenson (Editor) 0131 220 5655. Chris Bartter 0870 7777 006

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Published by UNISON Scottish Council, 14 West Campbell Street, Glasgow G2 6RX. Origination by FLESH Ltd 4 Roseneath Street Edinburgh EH9 11H Printed by Centurion Press Ltd, 17 Manchester Street, London, WIM 5PG

