

SBMG News



Scottish Black Members Group of UNISON

Winter 2008 Newsletter

Seasonal Message

Dear Readers

2008 has been an eventful year! In this year our world has witnessed a black man, Barack Hussein Obama, being elected as the 44th President of United States. This change inspires us all and along with many we look forward to see how change in the United States affects rest of the world.

In pursuit of change and to influence policy regionally, we engaged ourselves on four different fronts. Despite many challenges, it was the team work of colleagues on SBMC 2007-08, which enabled us to achieve all our targets. This year at our AGM in November, the Scottish Black Members once again unanimously elect the new SBMC for 2008- 09.

I congratulate new and old colleagues on their successful elections at the AGM. The task ahead for the new SBMC is challenging. However, I am sure unity, faith and discipline among our ranks will help us to perform well during our current term of office.

As 2008 is about to end; I wish you Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all!

Hamid Rasheed
Chair Scottish Black Members



Scottish Black Members AGM 2008

SBMG CELEBRATES ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR



Pav Akhtar (standing left) & Scottish Black Members

The Scottish Black Members Group Annual General Meeting took place in Perth this year on Saturday 17 November 2008.

Pav Akhtar, our National Equality Officer, was the guest speaker. Pav talked about UNISON rolling out its new training programme - Challenging Racism in the Workplace. The training would be supplemented by 'Challenging Racism in the Workplace tool kit' and other materials, which would equip branches to negotiate equal opportunities for all members by holding employers to account on race equality legislation.

The legislation is already in place," said Pav. "It's up to us as a trade union to understand that legislation, and make sure that we make demands based on it, to achieve equality. We need to ensure that race equality is incorporated into our core negotiations with employers. If you like, the law gives our activists the tools and this course is giving them the skills."

Elections for the Scottish Black Members Committee took place at the AGM and the following members were elected:

Hamid Rasheed: Chair
Tamara Mhura & Patricia Agu: Vice-Chair (Job Share)
Ismail Donmez: Secretary
Menchie Aquino & Rajender Aggarwal: Budget Officer
Nahid Aslam & Tina Makedenge: Membership Officer (Job Share)
Kashina Kashina & Ravi Nathan: Education Officer (Job Share)
Lui Giacomello: Communications Officer
Patricia Agu & Tamara Mhura: NBMC Reps (Job Share)
Hamid Rasheed & Ismail Donmez: NBMC Reps (Job Share)

SBMC Welcomes Proposals for Dungavel Detainees

The Scottish Black Members welcomed the UK government's recent proposal that families of failed asylum seekers could be moved to city centre flats instead of being kept at Dungavel detention centre.

Hamid Rasheed, Chair Scottish Black Members of UNISON said: "UNISON Scotland represents over 100,000 local government members in Scotland, more than 25,000 of whom work in social care, many in the front line of delivery of services to asylum seekers and their families.

"We believe that the detention of children without due process is unacceptable and is a clear breach of their rights under UNCRC and legislation Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Detaining these children is wrong – regardless of the merits of a family's asylum case".

SCOTTISH TRADE UNION SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE CONFERENCE

Trade Union Solidarity with Palestine

10am, Saturday 17 January 2008

Augustine United Church Centre, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh

*Breaking the Barriers -
Building trade union
solidarity with
Palestinian workers.*

Speakers:

Manawel Abdel Al will speak on behalf of the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU)

Selim Vally of South Africa is a founder member of COSATU and a spokesperson for the Anti-War Coalition and Palestine Solidarity Committee

Katherine Nastowski was the Chair of the International Solidarity Committee of Ontario CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) when this key Canadian union was committed to boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel.

Speaker from the **Palestinian Grassroots Stop the Wall Campaign**



To register contact: campaign@scottishpsc.org.uk or 0131 6200052
Organised by Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign
www.scottishpsc.org.uk

The 'Trade Union Solidarity with Palestine' conference is scheduled to take place on Saturday 17 January 2009 at Augustine United Church Centre, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh.

The conference aims to educate trade unionists on the current situation for Palestinian workers and to debate and provide information for trade unionists on the current call from the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) and other Palestinian trade unions for a campaign of Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions.

Ismail Donmez, Secretary Scottish Black Members said: "UNISON Scotland and its Scottish Black Members have always supported the Palestine cause and expressed solidarity with Palestine. On the day of the conference many of us will be attending our National Black Members Conference in Bristol. "Yet nevertheless, we encourage our members based in Edinburgh to seek support from their branches, via their branch self organising groups to attend the conference."

Sofiah MacLeod, Secretary Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign while inviting UNISON branches and their members to the conference said: "You can support this conference in several ways.

"You can send delegates to conference to give a formal report back to your branch (delegation fee £10). Or distribute the conference details to your members. You can also sponsor the conference, by passing a branch motion urging your branch to make a financial contribution." The conference enjoys full support of the UNISON Scotland's Scottish International and Scottish Black Members Committee.

ST ANDREW'S DAY MARCH

An Injury to One is An Injury to All!



The annual Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) St Andrew's Day Anti – Racist march took place on 29 November in Glasgow, with the theme: "Scotland against Racism!"

Scottish Secretary, Matt Smith said: "UNISON continues to play a prominent role in the St Andrew's Day March and Rally. This annual event is one which trade unionists are proud to support as we continue to promote our campaign against racism. We shall soon be starting the planning of the event for 2009 and UNISON will again be a major contributor to this important event".

Prime Minister Gordon Brown and First Minister Alex Salmond sent messages of support but were unable to attend. Mr Brown backed the march and said: "I'm very proud of the role that the Labour movement has played in the fight against racism and fascism in Scotland, and I'm delighted to see the leading role that the STUC continues to play in the campaign."

The day started with a march from St Andrews Square and continued with a celebration rally at Glasgow Film Theatre, Chaired by Nazerin Wardrop. Over 800 people, including UNISON members, fellow trade unionists, politicians, faith and community groups participated the march. At the rally Grahame Smith, General Secretary STUC, Zakia Yousaf of Gara, Gurjit Sing President NUS Scotland and Mr Bhari of Scottish Asian Action Committee were among the guest speakers. The event was also supported by the Glasgow Anti-Racism Alliance.

National Black Members Conference 2009

The 2009 National Black Members Conference is to be held on 16-18 January 2009 at the City Centre Marriott Hotel in Bristol.

Editor's Corner

Lui Giacomello

Another year, another AGM! We have some old faces and some new ones elected to the SBMC. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Zia Hussain, last year's joint editor for all the good work and support he has given.