

Issue 2, Wednesday 21st June 2017

Dave Prentis, UNISON General Secretary, opened his address to the NDC with the great news that UNISON is now the largest union in the UK with 200,000 more members than Unite.

Dave referred to the horrifying decision of Teresa May to form a government with the DUP as "being between the devil and the DUP" and stated that we live in a divided kingdom of the "have" and "have nots" a "tale of 2 cities".

In expressing grief for the horrific disasters of Westminster, Manchester, London Bridge, Grenfell Tower, and Finsbury Park, Dave spoke of the injustices of these disasters. He went on to say that there was also a glimmer of hope in the way that people came together showing kindness, compassion, and humanity in comparison to the cold, callous, and emotionless response of Teresa May.



In paying tribute to the response of the community and public services Dave commented that he believed the majority of people are decent and that this proved Thatcher was wrong when she said there was no such thing as "society".

Dave paid tribute to UNISON friend and leader of the Labour Party Jeremy Corbyn, announcing he would be joining conference on Friday, as a decent politician, bringing kindness and humanity to the political table, who is capable of leading us all in the right direction. He then went on to call for Teresa May to resign stating she is weak and unable to lead.

Stating that Labour's manifesto is UNISON's manifesto, Dave said this would restore social justice, back our public services, and would end the pain of austerity. However he went on to say that he could not agree with Labour's stance on nuclear weapons when many UNISON members are visiting food banks to survive.

One of the main themes of the address was that "we are at our best when we are united" and referred also to the work done with the Labour Party in ensuring that young people were registered to vote, along with many other matters.

Tribute was paid to the 10 new UNISON MP's elected together with existing ones. A special mention was made of Eleanor Smith, past president who is now the MP for Wolverhampton South West - especially sweet as it was Enoch Powell's old seat. Dave stated we are now ready for another election that Labour will win.

The General Secretary gave examples of legal cases that are ongoing - UNISON leading the way in campaigning on the abolition of Employment Tribunal fees and the abuses in Social and Home Care.

Dave gave credit to the UNISON successes in Scotland with the Living Wage, England and Wales in stopping forced academies and N. Ireland on campaigning for unity and peace. He then continued to praise the successes in Derby and Durham for the School Assistant campaign and the continued support for the WASPI campaign.

In calling for unity within UNISON Dave quoted Fidel Castro "It is only unity that can bring victory". He then called for full branch support for the NHS rally on the 1/pay Dave stated emphatically that this is our year to smash the public services pay cap and we would be looking to the TUC to lead on this but if they wouldn't UNISON would. In concluding his address Dave paid tribute to all branches but especially to the heroism of the London Ambulance branch on display in the most recent horrific disasters.

Denise Ward, Regional Treasurer
In calling for unity within UNISON Dave quoted Fidel Castro "It is only unity that can bring victory". He then called for full branch support for the NHS rally on the 1/7/17.

Getting the Public on our side – public service campaigning



The Government's austerity measures have had a devastating impact, taking unemployment in the North East to the highest in England and bringing back social deprivation not seen since Margaret Thatcher's Government. Responding to this the Northern Region knew it was key to get the public on our side and therefore the Northern Public

Services Alliance (PSA) was born in 2010. The PSA involves trade unions, local voluntary/community sector organisations, user groups and politicians and campaigns in partnership against the massive public sector cuts on the Government's political agenda.

New ways of organising continue to be required, engaging beyond usual ranks, and bringing in new union members and activists to reflect the diversity of workplaces and communities. Particular emphasis is on attracting women and young people, who are struggling to gain employment or access to further training.

The Northern PSA strategy has four strands. Alongside developing and promoting an alternative economic agenda, emphasis will be placed on workplace organising and engaging members and the public within the local coalitions.

The Alliance focuses on engaging members on the promotion of positive bargaining agendas, such as the implementation of a Living Wage; fighting for fair pay; and promoting alternatives to privatisation. A campaign pack has been produced to give people confidence in promoting alternative economic and political strategies. Also imperative to the success of the campaign is building meaningful community-trade union alliances.

Community and voluntary sector engagement in the defence of public services is essential. This means making the agenda relevant for these sectors - making it clear that this is not just about defending jobs, but rather about developing a clear response to the Government's attacks on the Welfare State and public services.

The challenges are huge. However, the strength of the Northern PSA is continues to grow, and is having an impact on trade union members, the public and political decision makers. We have held vibrant campaigns in Gateshead around the Library Services and the ongoing campaign in South Tyneside around the proposed downgrading of South Tyneside Hospital continues to engage with the public and local residents. This Government does not have a mandate for many of the policies it is introducing and the PSAs need to continue to challenge them at every stage, involving and encouraging more UNISON members and activists as well and members of the public to get involved.

Nicky Ramanandi and Linda Hobson, Regional Delegates

Motion 2 – Organising and growing our membership in Private Contractors

UNISON Northern has 9,213 members working in this sector, many of whom have been TUPE'd from the public sector although many are working for 'Large Chain Providers of Public Services' where UNISON doesn't have recognition.

Many are on zero hour contracts, National Minimum Wage and often have very little security within their first two years of employment and don't have the benefit of union recognition.

This motion which we strongly support, encourages branches to tap into new areas of growth and presents new opportunities for up and coming activists to play their part at branch, regional and national level of our union.

Our Region supports two General Fighting Fund posts, which recruit, organise and train new activists predominately in Private Residential Care but not exclusively as other areas such as pharmacies, dentistry and homecare are increasing in membership.

The Region is represented on the National Forum within Four Seasons Healthcare by two local representatives, but we need more activists from branches representing the other Private Contractors. We have recognition nationally with Four Seasons Healthcare and we hope to gain many more locally agreed recognition agreements in the months ahead as we grow in new areas of the Private Sector.

This motion also looks to engage branches with more emphasis on the Private Sector, sending delegates to forums relevant to their employer and continue the campaign on issues such as Zero Hour contracts and UNISON's Ethical and Private Residential Charter where appropriate. The Northern Region is already rolling out training within the sector designing it to suite the organisation/sector and making it more relevant. It's really important that branches make the private sector inclusive in terms of branch committee and making sure that future Joint Branch Assessments reflect the growing membership.

The private sector isn't without its challenges as fragmentation in none unionised culture, means it is difficult to encourage activists to become more involved in the day to day branch activities.

We urge you to support Motion 2, which will seek to explore new models of organising and build on the work we've already undertaken to make a stronger, supported sector giving opportunities for activists to flourish.

The logo for 'ORGANISE' is displayed in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letter 'O' is stylized with a white circle inside. The text is centered on a rectangular background that features a horizontal gradient from light green on the left to light blue on the right.

ORGANISE

Developing an Organising Branch

In looking at Motion 1 Developing an Organising Branch I'd like to let you all know about Sunderland University Branch's recent experiences that really show the context of Motion 1 can and does work. In Sunderland we've recently gone through a period of significant cuts which have seen 20% of support staff lose their jobs. The unforeseen affect of this has been the loss of all our branch exec to redundancy with the exception of me.

Following on from discussions with our branch Area Organiser I agreed to stand and become Branch Secretary, since then the challenges have been immense. I've met with prospective stewards and branch officers and following on from this work and conversations we've managed to successfully build a new branch executive that now has at its start more members than the outgoing branch had. However, none of them had any experience of being a steward or a branch officer. To help establish the branch we've worked in close partnership with the Area Organiser to put in place training which is currently taking place, he is also providing 1-1 support for all the new branch officers, mentoring them when needed.

The makeup of the branch now has more women members vastly improving its proportionality and the branch has now held its first executive meetings and we've put in place a clear strategy to grow:

- Regular exec meetings have been put in place for 2017
- A communications strategy has been developed which has seen the launch of a new newsletter and website.
- Facility time has been shared across the new officers
- Training for all the new stewards is currently being achieved
- We are providing regular support to all the new branch officers as they develop into the role
- We're looking to put tailored training into disciplinary casework for a small team of stewards who have identified that they would be willing to undertake casework. The intention is to have a specific casework team moving forward so all the work doesn't fall onto just one or two people. The Area Organiser will be heading the team to help mentor the group as cases come into the branch
- We've got regular attendance agreed at all the main negotiating committees within the University so that direct support on policy development can be provided whilst officers acquire the new skills they will need.
- As a result of the redundancies the branch has lost a significant number of its members, in working with the new executive we have already started on the development and implementation of a recruitment strategy encompassing a wide range of strands and it is already starting to attract new people. The sort of thing we are starting is;
 - Direct involvement at inductions and we have now got permission to give a presentation to new staff
 - Recruiting a friend for £10 with financial awards being offered to top recruiters every six months
 - Any and all branch communications that go out now have details of how to join.
 - Specific event based stalls
 - Leafleting membership benefits in public area's
 - Walk around targeted areas following on the branch mapping that has been completed.
 - Generally talking to people when any opportunity arises to build up the branch profile and demonstrate that UNISON is still relevant in the University
 - Branch Secretary and Assistant Branch Secretary drop in sessions for members with issues they'd like to discuss
 - The branch have elected rep's onto Regional Council and Regional Higher Education Service Group so wider participation is forming part of the new executive from the outset

Overall recruitment has been identified as the principal issue the branch wants to deal with to ensure that they have strong branch moving forward. The message I'd give is that when we put organising at the heart of work we can meet any challenge that being fired at us.

Ivan Lehane, Sunderland University Branch

Motion 57—A Living Pension

Social Progress now enables people to live longer but in many instances this also means working longer. People can only afford to retire when they have financial security.

The Cridland Review of the State Pension Age (SPA) has made a number of recommendations including raising the SPA to 68 by 2039 and replacing the triple lock after 2020 by a simple link to earnings. Interestingly it also states the Government has a responsibility to communicate directly with those affected by the changes to the SPA.



Raising the SPA inevitably has the greatest impact on those with shorter life expectancies often in lower paid jobs doing manual or stressful work, in poorer health and living in more deprived areas of the country.

Suggestions that the triple lock is too generous and unaffordable ignore the very real reduction in value that the state pension suffered when the link with earnings was broken by the Conservative Government in 1980.

In 2010 when the triple lock was introduced the pension would have been £161.30 a week had the earnings link still been in place compared to the actual figure of £97.65. This loss has never been recouped. The reliance on the state pension will grow and many future pensioners could end up working longer, paying more and getting less state pension.



Pensioners and younger generations must make a clear stand for a flexible and generous retirement system and of course a living pension.

Eileen Thompson, Retired Members Rep

Show Racism the Red Card

The first fringe event of NDC was organised by Show Racism the Red Card. The event was excellent with excellent guest speakers including, Regional Secretary Williams,



event
Card.

Clare

Margaret Greer, UNISON National Race and Equality Officer, Liam Rosenior, professional footballer, Brighton FC, Elizabeth Cameron, UNISON National Black Members Committee, Stephen Cavalier, CO Thompson Solicitors, Mohammed Ali from a local project and Chris Blower, Vice President SRtRC. The event was chaired by Ged Grebby.

Clare spoke of the long, deep and strong relationship our Region have with SRtRC and the importance of this partnership to continue and not to be underestimated. Clare spoke of work we did following the Referendum result to exit the EU. "In the eye of some of those who hold racist views, the referendum result legitimised these opinions and emboldened them to act on those views, working with SRtRC we have challenged them. Working with members and branches we have held myth buster and training sessions. We have run a successful Ambassador programme".

Liam explained how he was motivated to work with the STtRC to challenge racism and educate our young people, following hearing how his dad was racially abused and called names. Liam said that young people are the future, mothers and fathers who will educate our future generations. Chris added that building and changing our future will be changing one child at a time.

Elizabeth and Margaret spoke passionately about how our education must go hand in hand with our values to help and support each other and challenge racism everywhere and at all levels.

Mohammed spoke of our rule to educate our young people as fathers, mothers, teachers and trade unions to fight racism, islamaphobia, homophobia and all forms of hatred.

Racism is a real and present problem in modern Britain and must be challenged and defeated at every level and I will urge all members and branches to be involved in the excellent work that our Region do with STtRC.



Mo Abuzahra
South Tyneside LG Branch

International Rally

UNISON International Rally and reception 2017 was held on the eve of National Delegate Conference on Monday evening. Prior to the rally, delegates had the opportunity to meet and chat to our international guests and UNISON's National international Committee. The rally was opened by Dave Prentis and he welcomed our guests from Bangladesh, Cuba, Palestine, and the the European Federation of Public Service Unions. Dave highlighted how unions in different parts of the world face similar challenges to our own such as privatisation, austerity and inequality. Through international projects and partnership working with other trade unions including Public Services International (PSI), Union Network International (UNI) and the European Public Service Union (EPSU), we work to promote the policies and interests of its members. UNISON's knowledge and participation on the issues affecting international development is key so that we can better look after members' interests and build the capacity of other workers to defend and protect their worker's rights.



Delegates at the rally heard from Salauddin Shapon, president of the Bangladesh Revolutionary Garment Workers' Federation (BRGWF), Dulce María Suárez, General Secretary of Cuba's Public Administration Workers's union, Santiago Badia Gonzalez, General Secretary of the Cuban Health Worker's Union, Jan Willem Goudriaan the General Secretary of the European Public Service Union and Erez Wagner from the Workers Advice Center at Zarfati Garage in the Israeli settlement of Mishor Adumin, in the occupied West Bank,

Salauddin, president of the Bangladesh Revolutionary Garment Workers' Federation, addressed the rally on the issue of how people are dying for a living and how work is becoming more precarious in a global move to drive down costs. As workers rights are eroded, inevitably slavery and other extreme forms of labour violations are increasing.

Dulce and Santiago, spoke of the Cuban achievement in investing in universal healthcare, free education and social progress and how this has been inspiring not only in Latin America but around the world. Dulce also described how the economic failure and social disaster of the global financial meltdown has been “devastating for the poorest of the world,” she said that neoliberal governments have created threats to the world itself and to people across the planet. “Neoliberalism is not a viable system and its social consequences are disastrous. The alternative is to globalise solidarity and co-operation” and trade unionists have a responsibility to work toward that”

Jan Willem Goudriaan touched on the impact of Brexit and how we still have little information as to what the UK government intends to achieve from leaving the EU. He also touched on how important it is that we as a union don't exit the EU and continue to protect our economy and public services along with workers rights.

It was really great to hear about the excellent work that UNISON undertaken in Cuba, Palestine, Turkey, Bangladesh and across European to challenge inequality, build capacity and support public sectors workers. It was also great to be with friends from around the world discussing the issues we all face home and abroad and send a message of solidarity to all trade unionists around the world.



“The future depends on ourselves. Globalisation should be a globalisation of brotherhood, sustainable development and fairness of resources.” Fidel Castro

Mo Abuzahra , Chair of Northern Region International Committee

Feedback from the Fringe – Exiting The EU – getting a fair deal for public service workers

The meeting was well organised with excellent speakers, these were Kier Starmer – MP, Sanchita Hosuli British Institute for Human Rights, Clare Moody MEP and Kathleen Sobleen, UNISON.

thanks so much for ensuring we focus on how we support our brothers and sisters from both within the EU, the International Community and here in the UK. Many of whom feel uncertain at best and for a considerable number of them afraid for their future and that of their families.

Kier Starmer – MP raised the big question how do we as Trade Unionists influence Brexit. Firstly by getting Labour into power as soon as possible – the conditions are right to win. We need to hold this government to account and change the tone of the current debate. We have shared social history and a shared set of values and we need to focus on collaboration and partnership. We need to bury the idea that no deal is better than a bad deal – no deal is the worst possible outcome.

We need to ensure we as trade unionist are involved more in the process and in forming the terms of the deal. Human rights are crucially linked to these issues Sanchito clearly articulated that no one who has power should be above the law. A Human Rights framework ensures government is accountable and we as Trade Unionists need to ensure our Human Rights are entrenched and so do not fall behind.

Lastly and critically UNISON has worked with Kier Starmer and a campaign in addition to clear guidance was launched in February 2017. This places the needs of the EU workers centrally.

Our EU colleagues are diverse and have differing needs and concerns – disabled members fear they may no longer be able to access health care, LGBT members may fear having to leave the UK as their safety could be compromised. Bullying, harassment and racism has increased in the workplace as the climate created by Brexit discussions has enabled this – hate crime is rising.

The guidance sets out clear measures and ways in which we can reach out and support our colleagues. A facebook page has been set up to support EU members – please encourage members to join this and feedback and raise issues.

Lesley Storey, Newcastle City



On The Fringe...

Lunchtime:

How to build an organising branch?

Room 1A

Still just a bit of banter? Sexual harassment in the work place.

Room 1B

Making the Political Fund a success after the Trade Union Act

Syndicate 2 Ground Floor

Fighting job insecurity and the case for improved workers' rights

Syndicate 3 First Floor

3 million apprenticeships by 2020—what's the plan

Syndicate 4 First Floor

Justice for Colombia
Auditorium 2

Evening:

Objective based budgeting
Syndicate 1 Ground Floor

Solidarity with Palestine
The Restaurant



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FRINGE MEETING THURSDAY LUNCHTIME ENGAGING POST-INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITIES

HOPE not hate's *Fear and HOPE* report finds a direct correlation between post-industrial communities and fear and hate. The areas that have experienced the greatest upheaval – both economically and in terms of the identity of local communities – over the last 25 years are those where negative attitudes towards immigration and multiculturalism are at their highest.



We want to address the divisions that have increasingly arisen in these disaffected post-industrial ('left behind') communities. They are characterised by a loss of industry that has not been replaced; an accompanying loss of identity; and a feeling that the future is going to be worse than the past.

Increasingly in these areas a loss of hope has become a breeding ground for division and racism. We are piloting interventions in three communities – Dudley, Merthyr Tydfil and Rotherham – seeking to challenge racism by addressing the factors that give rise to the hopelessness upon which it breeds.

By bringing people together to identify, address and act upon the real causes of the challenges they face, they will begin to effect change. Through this process of developing their own agency (becoming 'players') the community will resolve issues, build alliances and lose the need to hold someone to blame. It is in this way that the process is designed to be transformational.

THURSDAY 22 JUNE, 12.45-1.45, ROOM 1B

Speakers: Nick Lowles, HOPE not hate | Ravi Subramanian, W. Midlands Regional Secretary | Clare Williams, Northern Regional Secretary

LUNCH PROVIDED



This year's Regional Social will be happening on:

Thursday 22nd June

From 7.30 pm

At OHSO SOCIAL

Kings Road NE1 1NB

It's an opportunity for Northern Delegates to get together informally for a drink and a bite to eat from the buffet. With a DJ playing some tunes it will be a relaxing and enjoyable evening and we hope you can join us.

Your Newsheet Needs You!!

You're here at Conference! Is it your first time? Are you speaking in a debate? Got something to say about your time in Brighton? Let us know your thoughts, opinions and views through our Regional newsletter.

**See Allison in the Newsheet Room (3rd Floor) or e-mail her
a.jackson2@unison.co.uk**

