



The only news worth reading, from UCL UNISON —Your friend in the workplace

UNISON donates initial £10k to disaster and pledges more

UNISON is donating an immediate £10,000 to the Disasters Emergency Committee fund to help survivors of the south Asian earthquake and tsunami, and is urging all branches and members to give generously in support of the appeal.

The union has also earmarked a further £10,000 to help sister trade unions in the area rebuild their organisations after the disaster.

The union is working closely with the TUC and international union federations on the issue and general secretary Dave Prentis has written to all UNISON's sister unions in the area to express condolences and pledge support them at this terrible time.

"No one can have failed to be touched by the overwhelming scale of the disaster or the deep personal impact it has had," said Prentis.



Come to the next Branch Meeting to find out more about UCL UNISON's plans to raise money for the Tsunami disaster appeal fund

"Our hearts are with all those who have suffered so terribly over the last days. And our thoughts are with all our fellow emergency workers, health workers and local government staff who have been, and continue to be, working so tirelessly on the frontline of the rescue and aid operations."

The Disasters Emergency Committee, www.dec.org.uk, is an umbrella group of UK aid organisations. Donations can be made online at the following link:

https://www.donate.bt.com/bt_form_dec.htm

NEXT BRANCH MEETING

**Wednesday
12th January
2005
1-2pm
Foster Court
Room 216**

**Please send agenda items to the
Chair Wendy Biggin c/o**

UCL UNISON Office

Brook House

2-16 Torrington Place

Or email: unison@ucl.ac.uk

by 5pm on

Monday 10th January 2005



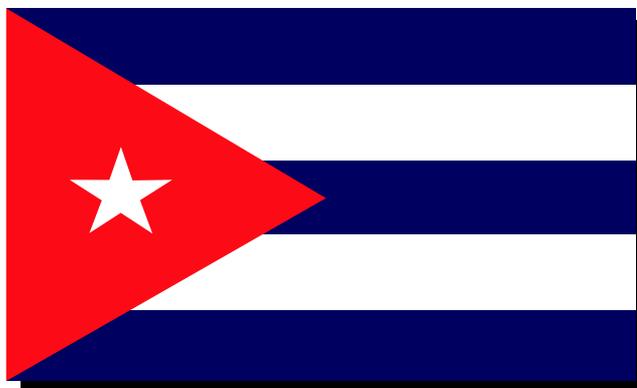
UNISON
the public service union

UNIONS FOR CUBA CONFERENCE

Saturday, 6th November, 2004

Hundreds of British trade unionists gathered at Congress House to hear about the experiences of our Cuban counterparts. It was the largest Cuban delegation ever to come over; the 27 people (16 of whom were women) represented 12 of Cuba's 19 trade unions, and included Francisco Duran Harvey, the Deputy General Secretary of the Cuban TUC.

The Conference was sponsored by the British TUC who for the first time this year had (unanimously) passed a resolution calling for an immediate end to the US blockade. Pedro Ross, General Secretary of the Cuban TUC, had been an invited speaker to their Annual Conference and had received a standing ovation (in contrast to Blair's lukewarm reception earlier in the week!).



Twenty eight British unions are nationally affiliated to Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC) (the organisers of the conference) and they were impressively represented by amongst others the TUC President, Jeannie Drake, the TUC Assistant General Secretary, Kay Carberry, Jane Carolan (Unison) and Ruth Winterbottom (Fire Brigades Union) – all women – as well as Bob Crow (RMT), Hugh Lanning (PCS), Kevin Curran (GMB) and Rodney Bickerstaffe (formerly of Unison now President of The National Pensioners' Convention). Former M.P. Tony Benn was the last speaker, to round up the day.

Ken Gill (Chair CSC), opened by reminding us of the imminent danger Cuba is currently in with the re-election of Bush. At an election address in Florida, Bush had told a baying audience of far-right Cuban exiles that "the people of Cuba should be freed from their tyrant".

Gill introduced our guest speaker, Francisco Duran Harvey who thanked CSC for all the excellent work they do, adding that the solidarity they receive from around the world is much appreciated by the Cubans. He then went on to emphasise the importance of strengthening the campaign to overturn the evil blockade.

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At the UN this year, 179 nations had voted to end the blockade with only the US, Israel and the Marshall Islands voting against.

The following are some comments made during the day.

Bob Crow mentioned the plaque at RMT headquarters for the 110 volunteers who fought in the Spanish Civil War. He said we needed to declare that, if Bush attacks Cuba, we'd form an International Brigade.

Hugh Lanning said his union was newly affiliated and he didn't know much about Cuba. However the P.C.S. had really valued the fact that the Cuban trade unionists had joined them on their picket lines during their recent strike.

Jane Carolan "We have an illness service whereas

in Cuba the health service is preventative. We can learn from existing socialism."

Ruth Winterbottom also spoke of what we can learn from the Cubans. Despite shortages, their fire service is very well organised, something she can't say about our service here.

Bickerstaffe said "all you need to know is the difference between right and wrong as the biggest country in the world is trying to smash a tiny island. Whenever you speak to MPs you should always mention Cuba."

The workshop I attended – The Impact of the Blockade on Communications – was very knowledgeably addressed by the young Black Cuban delegate. She told us that, whilst their telecommunications are modern, the US makes it impossible for them to get the necessary spare parts. With the introduction of digital technology, many operators were left without a job. However re-training is a priority in Cuba.

UNIONS FOR CUBA CONFERENCE

(cont'd)

The postal service on the other hand is very out-of-date. In 1993, China sent many bicycles for the postal workers. There is now one bicycle factory in Cuba but again the problem is lack of materials.

Silvia Martinez Puentes introduced her book just out in Spanish and English "Cuba beyond our dreams". This is available from CSC.

Tony Benn reminded us how Cuba is a model for the world. "Although the present world situation is grim", he said, "public opinion here is well to the left of the present government. We represent the majority and the role of the trade union movement is crucial. In the U.S. the peace movement is linked to the hilt with the trade unions."

He thanked our Cuban visitors for inspiring us and wished to convey our recognition of what they were doing to offer hope for the world.

Anne Johnson

HIGHER EDUCATION UNISON CONFERENCE 2005

This years UNISON Higher Education Service Group National Conference is on 22 March 2005 in Plymouth. .

UCL UNISON Branch is entitled to 4 delegates and we try to ensure that the make up of the delegation represents the membership in terms of proportionality and fair representation.

Closing date for delegate registration is Friday 21 January 2005

If you wish to attend the conference either as a delegate or visitor then please contact us (voicemail x46587 or email: unison@ucl.ac.uk)

Alternatively you can attend one of this months' branch members meetings and let us know then.



UNISON Welfare es el brazo caritativo de UNISON.

UNISON es el unico sindicato del Reino Unido que cuenta con una organizacion caritativa para ayudar a sus miembros en tiempos de crisis o penalidades economicas.

UNISON Welfare, junto a UNISON Plus, te ofrece una variada gama de servicios de ayuda y consejo, especialmente si cuentas con un salario bajo. Este es otro gran beneficio de ser miembro de UNISON.

Todos podemos encontrarnos en dificultades en cualquier momento de nuestras vidas por una gran variedad de razones. UNISON Welfare puede ser de gran ayuda gracias a sus capacitados consejeros quien te escucharan y daran consejo en confidencialidad.

Tanto si has estado de baja por enfermedad, como si acabas de salir de una relacion dificil o has sufrido la perdida de un familiar directo, o simplemente si te acabas de encontrar con una gran factura inesperada, UNISON Welfare esta aqui para ayudarte.

Aunque UNISON Welfare no puede suministrar pagos en caso de huelga, si te encuentras en dificultades economicas y no puedes pagar una cuenta importante o tus impuestos municipales, puede que seas elegible para alguna ayuda economica.

Muchos miembros de UNISON ya se han beneficiado de UNISON Welfare. Si no te podemos ayudar directamente con ayuda economica, en la mayoria de los casos podemos ponerte en contacto con otras instituciones que pueden ayudarte.

Si te encuentras con deudas debidas a tus tarjetas de credito, UNISON Welfare DEBTLINE te puede ayudar con consejo confidencial. Para contactar con tu delegado de UNISON Welfare, consulta la seccion 'quien es quien en el sindicato'. Por deudas en tus tarjetas de credito, llama al numero que aparece abajo.

Women's Health and Safety Conference
Held in ULU, 21 September, 2004
Hosted by the Labour Research
Department

by Marie Parker

Working while pregnant

Stress suffered by a pregnant woman can damage the foetus and may cause behavioural problems after the child is born. The Health and Safety Executive says that women ought not to work in a stressful environment during pregnancy, and has literature on this.

More attention is needed to ensure that Black and Asian women know their legal rights and have their needs met. Remembering that a lot of ethnic-minority women may be concentrated in areas such as catering and cleaning, and that these are more often out-sourced and privatized, these women may have less protection and fewer legal rights than in-house workers.

Migrant workers also need to know their rights. The TUC is producing material on this in 30 languages.

UNISON have a good guide on women's health and safety, and everybody should have access to this.

Only 60 per cent of workers have access to the web.

Lessons from Europe

1 Italy

The CGIL-INCA is one of the three largest Italian trade unions, and half of its membership is female. Bruna Cossero, who is responsible for Health and Safety in this union, addressed the Conference.

Women, especially those with no or few qualifications, tend to feel insecure in their jobs. Therefore they are likely to consent to over-taxing themselves in an attempt to keep their jobs. This particularly applies to workers fleeing torture or death threats.

Recent changes in the Italian labour laws have taken rights away from part-time workers. Manual workers now have worse conditions and more accidents than before these changes.

This Italian trade union is working to raise consciousness of these issues, and is investigating problems especially affecting women, starting with the condition of women – how they feel – and then working back from this to the potential causes. Stressful or dangerous work is often the result of bad organization in the workplace.

2 France

Unions want women and men to be employed on an equal footing, with no discrimination; this will give women access to more types of work. This can sometimes have a beneficial effect on men's working conditions.

For example, postal bags weighing 150–200 kg, which were moved manually by men, caused them back problems (not surprisingly!).

After women gained access to this work, the weight of each bag was limited to 20 kg and trolleys were provided.

Women can be sexually harassed and abused at work by people in authority over them, and they can be too afraid and ashamed to mention this to anyone.

Stress at work can also prevent desired conception and pregnancy.

Additional risks to women's health may come from children, and from their work in the home. Women may be at risk from household products, and women employed in the cleaning sector may be at great risk from chemicals. Women have contracted asbestosis from washing the contaminated clothes of their husbands.



The physical demands on the body of maintaining a pregnancy are equivalent to three hours' physical work per day.

Protection of pregnant woman is not synonymous with protection of foetus. For example, foetus is exposed to noise through abdomen; therefore, issuing ear-muffs to woman does not protect foetus.

Hope Daley, National Health and Safety Officer, UNISON

Over three-quarters of UNISON's 1.2 million members are female. The work covers home care, health care, community care, the cleaning sector. Workers using low-level chemical products must know exactly what they are using, and their hazards, and the safe way of using them; very specific information and warnings are necessary on labels (so that people do not mix the chemicals dangerously, for example).

Insidious health risks are often ignored, e.g. chemicals. Also, some women are doing two or even three part-time jobs; this increases their health risk.

In USA, a person who was damaged as a foetus can subsequently sue. This has concentrated some minds wonderfully.....

When are the College Holidays?

UNISON have had a steady stream of queries over the years on how the College Holiday system works. This information should be provided by your manager or Human Resources but as this information is not always made readily available here is an explanation of the College Holidays at UCL for the year 2004/5

The holidays are on the following link:-

www.ucl.ac.uk/staff/term-dates/2004-05/

In total there are 6 College Days and these are given in addition to the Public Holidays and annual leave entitlement. The annual leave year is from October to October so these 6 days are spread across Christmas and Easter.

At Christmas the last day of work was 23rd December 2004 which was a Thursday.

Friday counts as a College Holiday (No.1) As Christmas Day and Boxing day fall on the weekend and are bank holidays these are added to the next week (i.e. Monday & Tuesday)- this means that Wednesday- Friday (29-31 December) also count as College Holidays (Total now = 4 College Holidays). New Years Day is a Public Holiday which was on a Saturday, so this counts as the day off on the 3rd January- which means back to work on the 4th. In total 4 College Days have been taken at XMAS.

At Easter last day of work is Wednesday 23 March. This means Thursday 24th March counts as College Holiday. Friday 25th and Monday 28th are bank holidays. Tuesday 29th is a College Holiday- 30th back to work- this means 2 College days taken at Easter.

Therefore 4 at XMAS + 2 at Easter = 6 in total.



Meeting dates for the coming term :

9th February, 1-2pm Foster Court Room 216

9th March, 1-2pm, Foster Court Room 216

13th April, 1-2pm, Foster Court Room 216

UCLUNISON BMG

The Black Members Group (BMG) was set up in 1998 with its main purpose to address the needs of ethnic minority members of staff within UCL. The group intend to achieve this through their aims and objectives.



The BMG meets on the last Wednesday of each month between 1 and 2pm. Any UNISON member who is of an ethnic minority may attend the meetings. Non UNISON ethnic minority members are also welcomed to attend the meetings in order to find out what the group is about and what could be offered to them. The meetings are informal and open to any discussions.

From time to time the group also holds social functions in order to promote good interaction within the group outside of the working environment. For further details and information on the next meeting, please contact Stephanie Smith on ext 45621



UCL UNISON Women Members Group (WMG)

The WMG has now been running in its current format for almost 3 years; the group has shown itself as a powerful and effective resource for raising all issues relating to sex discrimination, sexual and gender harassment, and gynaephobia within UCL, the trade union movement, and society in general. The group meets every 2nd Wednesday of the month; all women members are invited to come along and raise issues of importance to them.

For further information; Please contact Wendy Biggin on ext 09454(am)/37091(pm)

WHO'S WHO IN UCL UNISON BRANCH

Branch Officer Posts:

★ Black Members Officer	(VACANT)	unison@ucl.ac.uk
★ Chair	Wendy Biggin	w.biggin@ucl.ac.uk
★ Communications Officer	{VACANT}	unison@ucl.ac.uk
★ Disabilities officer	(VACANT)	unison@ucl.ac.uk
★ Education officer	(VACANT)	unison@ucl.ac.uk
★ Entertainments	Alex Molade	unison@ucl.ac.uk
★ Equalities	Sarah Alleemudder	s.alleemudder@ucl.ac.uk
★ Health and safety	Sam Attack	s.atack@ucl.ac.uk
★ International (joint)	Paola Stillone	p.stillone@medsch.ucl.ac.uk
★ International (Joint)	Colum Mc Dermott	colummcdermott@hotmail.com
★ Manual Staff Coordinator	Cleveland Davies	unison@ucl.ac.uk
★ Membership	Stephanie Smith	s.smith@public-health.ucl.ac.uk
★ Minutes	(VACANT)	unison@ucl.ac.uk
★ Lesbian, Gay and Transgender	[VACANT]	unison@ucl.ac.uk
★ Retired members officer	(VACANT)	unison@ucl.ac.uk
★ Recruitment Officer	Alex Molade	unison@ucl.ac.uk
★ Secretary	Tom Silverlock	t.silverlock@ucl.ac.uk
★ Treasurer	Andre Burbidge	andre.burbidge@lshtm.ac.uk
★ Vice-chair	[VACANT]	
★ Welfare (joint)	Wendy Biggin	see above
★ Welfare (joint)	Kenn Brown	see above
★ Women Members (joint)	Wendy Biggin	see above
★ Women Members (joint)	Marcela Wanasen	unison@ucl.ac.uk
★ Young person's	Hazel Crossley	h.crossley@ucl.ac.uk
Shop Stewards		
★ Library Services	Wendy Biggin	see above
★ LSHTM	Andre Burbidge	see above
★ Porters	Rob Connell	r.connell@ucl.ac.uk
★ Student Residences	Kenn Brown	see above

★ Security	Isaac Aresa	unison@ucl.ac.uk
★ Security	Khalid Inayat	unison@ucl.ac.uk
★ Refectory	Mary Guidera	unison@ucl.ac.uk
★ ICH Porters	Bill Savill	unison@ucl.ac.uk

Workplace reps:-

★ HCS	Sarah Alleemudder	see previous column
★ ISD	Hazel Crossley	

Safety Reps

★ Civil Engineering	Marie Parker	m.parker@ucl.ac.uk
★ Library Services	Wendy Biggin	see previous column
★ Estates and Facilities	Tom Silverlock	see previous column
★ HCS	Sarah Alleemudder	see previous column
★ Residences	Sam Attack	see previous column
★ Residences	Colum McDermott	see previous column

Acredited Learning Reps

★ Sarah Alleemudder	see previous column
★ Wendy Biggin	see previous column

Delegates to Committee for Equal Opprtunities

★ Sarah Alleemudder	see previous column
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Health & Safety Co-ordinator

★ Sam Attack	See previous column
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HERA Reps

Sarah Alleemudder, Andre Burbidge, Hazel Crossley, Jane Ferrie, Wendy Biggin, Maria Cotera, Marie Parker, Bill Savill, Rob Connell Sean Lewis

If you have any news or views you would like to see in *UNI news*, send them to:
unison@ucl.ac.uk

Deadline for next issue: February 14th 2005

This newsletter is published by UCL UNISON inc.

London School of Hygiene and Royal Veterinary College

Everybody needs a helping hand at work sometimes.

Join **UNISON** — Britain's biggest union to get your voice heard. From negotiating better pay and conditions to supporting you in cases of disciplinary or grievance issues, advice on health and safety or education and training, your **UNISON** branch is there to help you. Joining **UNISON** gives you access to a great range of membership benefits and offers too.

Join **UNISON** — altogether a better union.

To Join contact your local **UNISON** rep, e-mail; unison@ucl.ac.uk or telephone 020 7679 6587 (internal extension 46587) leaving your name, department and contact details

If you know someone who is interested in joining **UNISON**, please

Pass *UNI news* or this slip on to them.

Or call the **UNISON** recruitment hotline on 0800 70 70 77

