

The CWU Women's Conference is in Belfast on 23rd February.

The CWU Youth Conference will be held on Wednesday 27 February 2008 at CWU Headquarters.

The CWU Retired Members' Conference will be held on Thursday 6 March 2008 at CWU Headquarters.

#### Tolpuddle Green Camp

After the success of last year, this unique opportunity is being offered again. It is an accredited course in the Dorset camp from Wednesday 16 July through to the end of the Martyrs' Festival on 20 July. For copies contact the South West TUC on 0117 947 0521 southwest@tuc.org.uk



Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival 2008

#### South West Regional Education Event 2008

On 7-9th March the South West Region is holding its second annual Youth training Event. This year the course will take place at the "Bay View Hotel" in Newquay and will be on the topic of "Trade Unions and Globalisation". Branches will be expected to pay for the costs of Transportation and Subsistence.

Please could the names of anyone interested in attending be passed to Ralph Ferrett South West Regional Youth Secretary ASAP. **Please note that you will need the permission of your Branch to attend this course.**

If interested contact Ralph Ferrett ASAP.  
Ralph Ferrett at: Ralph.Ferrett@Royalmail.Com  
or call 07791 655 363

### Regional Contacts

#### Equality & Diversity Committee:

**Chair:** Trevor Matty, (see Worcester & Hereford branch for contact details).

**Secretary:** Gary Williams (see Solent branch for contact details).

**Regional Secretary:** Kevin Beazer;  
0117 935 0055, southwestregion@cwu.org

#### Branch Equality Officers:

**Bournemouth & Dorset Amal:** Luke Brown;  
luke.brown@unioncwu.org

**Bristol & District Amal**

**Cornwall Amal**

**Devon and Somerset Branch**

**Gloucestershire & North Wiltshire:** Les Glover,  
07793461434; l.glover@gnwb.com

**Gloucestershire Amal:** Katy Hartland,  
01425333970; kathy@wellerworld.co.uk

**Guernsey**

**Jersey**

**Madley C.C. & Maritime Northern**

#### Plymouth & East Cornwall

**Solent:** Gary Williams: 01202 511022; email  
cwusolent@btinternet.com

**South Devon & Cornwall:** Jennifer Forbes,  
07770279607; sdc.jenn@tiscali.co.uk

#### South West & Thames Valley

**South West Engineering:** Paschal Mensah,  
paschal.mensah@bt.com

**South West No.7:** Sandy Best, 01793517521;  
sandybest\_65@hotmail.co.uk

#### Swindon Supplies

#### Taunton

**Wessex South Central:** Andy Rathbone,  
07763458958; andyrath@hotmail.co.uk

#### Western M.T.

**Western Counties Amal:** Jo Batt  
buzzmi@tiscali.co.uk

**Worcester & Hereford:** Trevor Matty  
tmatty@dsl.pipex.com



# Equality Matters

Communication Workers Union - South West Region Equality & Diversity Newsletter

#### Introduction

Edition 1 February 2008

Hello and welcome to the first edition of our equality and diversity newsletter. Our aim is to provide information, news and contact details to assist branch representatives, provide equality rep's with a forum, and give every member an opportunity to find out why equality matters. Any rep or member with a story, question or request should email the Secretary or call one of the regional equality and diversity committee members, contact details can be found on the back page.



**Gary Williams, Secretary, South West Regional Equality & Diversity Committee**

With my second year elected as chair for the regional equality committee we intend to move forward after stalling due to industrial action commitments last year. We intend to develop the committee into its own entity attending all equality conferences eventually in our own right. I am confident with Gary's organisational skills & all of our commitment we shall prove to be a regular talking point in every branch across the south west. After a well attended AGM on January 31<sup>st</sup> I am hopeful that more branches will send equality officer to forthcoming meetings.



**Trevor Matty, Chair South West Regional Equality & Diversity Committee**

The South West Regional Equality & Diversity Committee plays a key part of the regional structure and along with the Women's Committee, Retired Members Committee, YAC Committee and Union Learning Committee all have an important role.

The SW E&D Committee has over a number of

years not been supported as well as it should be, but I am confident that following the recent AGM and election of Gary Williams [Solent Branch] as Secretary and Trevor Matty [Worcester & Hereford Branch] as chair the committee will grow in strength and become more proactive.

Equality & Diversity is an extremely important issue and affects many of our member's lives on a daily basis. It is vital we have a structure in place to deal with such issues and the Regional E&D Committee has a role to play in assisting Branches and developing the role of Branch Equality Officers. Unfortunately, discrimination on many levels continues to take place, this is unacceptable and needs to be dealt with promptly. The Union put a strategy in place to train every Union Official on Equality & Diversity. Consequently, it is imperative that every representative is given this training so discrimination is rooted out wherever it exists.

I am confident with the Regional E&D Officers in place and with the support and assistance of Branches that we can move the Equality & Diversity debate forward. I hope Branches will do their utmost to obtain Branch E&D Officers and also ensure that every representative receives the appropriate training. This will ultimately ensure that the Unions policies and objectives are communicated to the membership.

In conclusion if you are interested in becoming your Branch Equality & Diversity Officer or want to become involved in the Regional Equality & Diversity Committee please contact Gary Williams or me on the contact details which are advertised within this newsletter. **Kevin Beazer, South West Regional Secretary**



An Islamist cleric who has defended suicide bombings and the execution of homosexuals is to be allowed to enter the UK, sparking a major row between government departments.

The Observer newspaper reported that senior civil servants in the Home Office and Foreign Office have recommended ministers approve an application by Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who is banned from entering the United States, to come to London for medical treatment.

The Department for Communities and Local

Government are supposedly fearful that this may offend other faith groups, Muslims and gay activists.



In 2004 the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, invited Qaradawi, (pictured above), the spiritual leader of the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood, to the capital. The move provoked widespread protests.

## The Equal Pay Crisis - EHRIC & TUC Responses

Trevor Phillips, chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission has warned that the almost 40 year-old Equal Pay Act has 'reached its sell-by date' and should be scrapped in favour of modern legislation to get women a fair deal quickly.

There are currently an estimated 50,000 equal pay cases being brought by underpaid local council workers. The Commission estimates the numbers will rise threefold to 150,000 this year, causing the already painfully slow employment tribunal system to seize up 'like a blocked drain'.

To provide a genuine long-term solution, the Commission is proposing the introduction of representative actions, where hundreds of cases could be heard at the same time. This could reduce the number of cases by more than 90 per cent.

Trevor Phillips said that whenever possible, the hundreds of thousands of equal pay cases needed to be pulled out of the lengthy legal process and solved by such negotiated agreements. He said: 'These women deserve justice now, not justice in another decade. They are the care workers who look after your mum, the dinner ladies who look after your children. Every single one of us would suffer if they didn't put in the hours. These women have been underpaid for too long; they're not interested in yet more legal paperwork and shenanigans. They deserve the money in their pockets.'

Responding to the statement on equal pay from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Midlands TUC Policy officer **Alan Weaver** said: 'Prevention is the best cure for Britain's equal pay crisis. Collective agreements with employers address both the pay structures and the policies that cause discrimination. But where employers are unwilling to take action, trade unions have taken the fight for equal pay to the courts. Sadly, this process is unnecessarily expensive and time-consuming, and leaves underpaid women in limbo for far too long. The equal pay act is out of date and in urgent need of reform.'

**Facts:** There is a 17% gap between men and women's pay for full time work in the UK with a woman earning on average 83p for every £1 a man earns. For part time workers, there is a 38% gap with women earning on average 62p per hour for every £1 a man earns.

The Equal Pay Act 1970, has been in force for over 26 years, but has proved cumbersome and often ineffective. Nonetheless, the Act has been used successfully in many cases, and can be a weapon for trade unions to use when negotiating on pay.

Equal pay legislation only provides for equal pay between men and women where the difference in pay is due to sex discrimination. It does not outlaw all pay practices which are unfair or all differences in pay.

**Saturday 1 March** 9.30am TUC Conference Centre, Great Russell Street, London WC1



Themes include:

**Rock Against Racism**

**The rise of fascism in the 21st century**  
**Opposing racism and celebrating multiculturalism**

**Music's role against racism – 30 years after**

**No platform for the BNP**

**Challenging homophobia**

Over the last decade racism and Islamophobia in society have grown, culminating in the rise of the far right and fascist parties in particular the British National Party (BNP). In seven years the BNP vote has grown 97 fold polling over 3,000 votes in 2000 to over 292,000 in 2007.

This conference will discuss strategies to defeat fascism and bring together trade unions, faith groups, black, Asian, lesbian, gay and disabled communities.

To book please call 020 7833 4916 or email [unite@ucu.org.uk](mailto:unite@ucu.org.uk)

## Union's Win the Right to Expel Fascists

**The TUC has welcomed new laws for Unions to expel members for belonging to a political party.**

Commenting on proposed new laws giving Unions the right to expel members for belonging to a political party, TUC General Secretary **Brendan Barber** said: "Aslef's landmark victory before the European Court of Human Rights confirmed that unions should be free to decide who can be admitted into membership and in particular reaffirmed their right to exclude BNP activists. The Government's swift action to amend the law is welcome."

This comes after train drivers union Aslef defeated the UK government in the European Court of Human Rights over the expulsion of a member of the BNP. The UK government argued the union could not exclude someone for belonging to a legitimate political organisation.

**TUC LGBT Conference;** Thu, 3 Jul 2008 - Fri, 4 Jul inclusive at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS



The TUC LGBT Conference is one of the largest annual gatherings of LGBT activists and workers. The TUC welcomes visitors from relevant organisations to the event: if interested in coming, please contact us.

London Pride takes place Saturday 5th July so many delegates stay on to take part.

**TUC Women's Conference;** Wed, 12 Mar 2008 - Fri, 14 Mar inclusive at Floral Hall, Winter Garden, Eastbourne

Delegates will debate motions on a range of issues of importance to women in the UK and across the world.

### Bournemouth Pride 2008

This takes place on the 12th July, the weekend before Tolpuddle, so why not come along and bring your banners to both events!

Details at [www.bournefree.co.uk](http://www.bournefree.co.uk)

But the European court said Aslef had the right to expel members whose views were incompatible with its stated aims.

The case centred around Virgin train driver Jay Lee, expelled by Aslef after standing as a BNP candidate in 2002. Mr Lee won the right to remain a member of Aslef at two employment tribunals, but the European Court over-ruled the tribunals, saying Mr Lee would not suffer financially as a result of being expelled, as Aslef did not operate a closed shop and he was free to join another union.

The government has said its new Employment Bill would amend trade union membership laws "in the light of the European court judgement in Aslef v UK".

Under proposed new legislation, unions will be able to "expel members on the basis of their membership of a political party."