

## RESPECT

The dispute between George Galloway's supporters within Respect (particularly those concentrated in branches with strong commitments to Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities in East London and Birmingham), on the one hand, and Respect members who support the outlook of the Socialist Workers Party on the other, has finally come to a head.

This is not, strictly speaking, a *left-right* split. Most of the socialists unconnected with the SWP within Respect appear to have sided with George Galloway and his supporters. The SWP have expelled members of their party who have sided with Galloway, and there have been allegations that those opposed to the outlook of the SWP within Respect have been packing local branches with members who could be relied upon for religious or communal reasons to oppose explicitly socialist policies.

Consequently, resolutions about gay and lesbian rights, abortion, and trade union militancy – resolutions intended to challenge those with religious or communitarian or small business objections to equal rights policies – and resolutions about control of the party's National Council are particularly important.

In this regard resolutions 1, 19-21, 26-31, 35-37 and 53 are particularly relevant.

### Resolutions received for Respect Annual Conference 2007 [ on 17<sup>th</sup> November]

#### 1. Politics after Blair – National Council

Conference notes:

1. Tony Blair was driven from office by a combination of the resistance to occupation in Iraq and the effect of the anti-war movement in Britain.
2. That Gordon Brown remains committed to the overall neo-conservative US imperial project.
3. That Gordon Brown, even more than his predecessor, is the architect of New Labour's neo-liberal, pro-privatisation and anti-trade union social and economic policies.
4. Gordon Brown faces a rising level of industrial resistance among postal, rail, civil service, health and education workers.

5. That, in the wake of the failure of the Labour left to mount a significant challenge to Gordon Brown's coronation as Labour leader, the Labour Left is weaker than at any time in the last 50 years.

Conference believes:

1. That Respect should continue to play an integral role in the Stop the War Coalition, campaigning for a full and immediate troop withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan and against any attack on Iran.
2. That Respect should remain at the centre of resistance to the domestic effects of the 'war of terror'. We should be at the heart of resistance to Islamophobia and attacks on civil liberties.
3. That we should redouble our efforts to place ourselves at the heart of the social and trade union resistance to the effects of privatisation, deregulation and public-private partnerships. Brown's attempts to distance himself from Tony Blair over Iraq makes our re-emphasis on the economic record of Brown even more important.
4. The debate on Brown's attitude to the unions is polarising opinion among the rank and file of the unions and causing greater division at the top of the unions between those loyal to the New Labour project and its critics. The poor reception for Brown's speech at the TUC underlines this point.

Conference resolves:

1. To prioritise the building of the International Peace Conference organised by the Stop the War Coalition in Central Hall Westminster on 1st December and to publicise the cultural and other events organised around this conference.
2. To continue last year's policy of prioritising support for the work of Organising for Fighting Unions. To encourage all Respect groups to take initiatives based on Michael Lavalette's OFFU email newsletter and highly successful OFFU social event which drew shop stewards and union reps together from across Preston.
3. To organise sectional meetings of Respect supporters in various unions with the aim of deepening our support in the unions ahead of the GLA and general elections. This work should aim to advance the debate about the representation of trade unionists in politics.
4. To initiate more events like the Tower Hamlets anti-developers conference and the Manchester congestion charge debate to highlight our opposition to the effects of neoliberalism.
5. To make these themes central to our propaganda in council, regional and national elections.

## **2. Housing - Sheffield**

This conference notes that:

1. There is a severe housing crisis in the UK. The gap between average wages and average house prices has never been greater and even so called 'affordable' housing is often beyond the means of many people. This pressure is likely to increase as interest rates rise, banks tighten access to credit in the face of a possible economic recession and the New Labour government attempts to hold down wages for public sector workers.
2. As a result, millions of families are suffering. Homelessness has risen sharply under New Labour and this is just the tip of the ice-burg. Thousands are condemned to temporary accommodation and overcrowding for years, while languishing on the ever growing housing waiting list. Many families are forced apart because children can't afford to live in the same neighbourhood as their parents. For others, the only option is poor quality private renting, with high rents and low security. Even those with relatively good wages find themselves paying a high proportion of their income on housing costs as the house market spirals out of control. The consequences in terms of poor health, damaged education, crime etc. are enormous.
3. New Labour's housing policy has utterly failed to meet this crisis. It's obsession with neo-liberalism and home-ownership leaves the country at the mercy of the private property speculators who have no real interest in providing genuinely affordable housing.
4. The quickest, cheapest and most democratic way of meeting this crisis is council housing and public investment. Neither the private sector, nor housing associations are building enough of the homes we need. Successive Labour Party conferences and all the large trade unions have called on the government to invest in council housing, but the appeals have fallen on deaf ears.

This conference therefore resolves to:

1. Place the demand for genuinely affordable housing at the centre of RESPECT's campaign agenda.
  2. Redouble our commitment to Defend Council Housing and the Fourth Option.
  3. Oppose all demolition programmes, many of which are being carried out as part of the Mixed Communities strategy and note that the recent report by the Joseph Rowntree foundation concludes that there is no evidence that this strategy does anything to alleviate poverty.
  4. Produce a RESPECT housing manifesto as part of the materials for forthcoming election campaigns.
  5. Plan a high-profile road-show of meetings in key areas, aimed at bringing together local campaigns from a range of backgrounds.
  6. Produce a housing campaign kit to assist local groups to challenge existing policies on land use, empty homes, housing finance and fighting privatization.
- 3. Housing campaigns – Camden & Barnet**

Conference believes that Gordon Brown should be made to put his money where his mouth is concerning his promises over housing.

This means adding impetus to campaigning for:

1. The building of council housing on available land.
2. Allowing local authorities to maintain and improve existing council homes through direct investment.
3. Improvement to the rights of tenants of housing associations and private landlords.

#### **4. Gun and Knife Crime – West Central**

- 1) This conference recognises the concerns across many working class communities about the rising instance of gun and knife crime.
- 2) We congratulate those Respect groups which have organised successful meetings on the issue over the last six months and to Respect supporters in Brent, Hackney and Haringey for their successful work round two recent peace marches.
- 3) This conference urges Respect groups to initiate such meetings in areas where they have not yet happened.
- 4) We believe Respect has a unique message on this issue which breaks from New Labour and the Tories who want to further criminalise young people by adding to the battery of laws and restrictions affecting them and by increasing police powers.
- 5) We reaffirm that this issue cannot be divorced from the daily reality of racism and poverty in our society; the exclusion of black male pupils, in particular, from our schools; rising levels of youth unemployment; lack of facilities; rising instances of 'stop and search' by police; overcrowding and lack of decent homes.

#### **5. Gun crime – North Birmingham**

This conference notes:

1. Gun and knife crime are disturbing facts of life in many of our inner cities. They blight the lives of those they impact on.
2. Death by gun crime remains small compared to less reported deaths:
  - Death from gun crime 2006/2007 – 58.
  - Deaths following contact with the police 2003/2004 (the most recent year for which figures are available) – 100.
  - Deaths in road accidents 2005 – 3201.
  - 3000 workers and 1000 other people died in work related accidents in 10 years to 2003.

- Deaths from industrial diseases in 2003 - 2290.

3. The continued run down of resources for young people in our inner cities.

This conference believes:

1. Gun and knife crimes are used by the media and politicians to whip up panic and justify infringements on civil liberties
2. In particular the so called Black on Black violence is used by the media to whip up racism towards the black community.
3. This same panic is also used to undermine the black community in its own eyes: people are encouraged to believe it is their families' fault, and it is simply up to them to pull their children into line.
4. That the effect of institutional racism, school exclusions, poverty and under resourced youth facilities serves to drive young people away from society, and potentially into the hands of gangs.

This conference resolves:

1. That the solution to the problem does not lie in more police, more police powers or more ASBOs.
2. That local councils should demand more resources from government to finance resources aimed at young people.
3. That we speak out against the accusation that black families are failing their children.
4. That we seek to work with organisations searching for progressive solutions to this problem.
5. To produce a national policy leaflet in line with the above motion with up to date figures
6. To campaign nationally and locally for funding for self help and community organisations working with vulnerable young people, families or BME groups
7. Campaign for increased funding and support for vulnerable young people in schools to reduce the number of exclusions

## **6. Gun Crime – Enfield and Haringey**

### **Respect notes:**

The rise in the level of gun and knife crime.

That this problem is concentrated in black and working class communities among young people.

### **Respect believes**

1. The 'law and order' response of the government does not address the underlying reasons behind gun and knife crime
2. These problems are a direct result of government policy which has destroyed the social fabric of many working class communities.
3. Tougher sentences and more police are not the answer
4. Young people are seen as the enemy within by the government and media.

5. It is precisely because young people are not respected that a minority become deeply disaffected and alienated from wider society.
6. When people don't value their own lives it becomes easier for them to treat the lives of others with similar disdain.
7. We need immediate action to rebuild the welfare state and opportunities for young people in our inner cities

### **Respect demands**

1. High quality training and apprenticeships for all.
2. End to Asbos.
3. Raising of the age of criminal responsibility.
4. High-quality affordable housing to rid Britain of sink estates
5. End discrimination against working class children in the education systems – no more exclusions
6. Massive expansion of youth services to include recruitment of thousands of youth workers and trained mentors.
7. Youth drop in centres, fully staffed, in every ward.
8. National curriculum to include real black history.
9. Affordable childcare and community facilities to help families support their children.

### **Respect resolves**

1. To launch a national campaign to tackle gun crime through the implementation of the above demands
2. To initiate a national petition to seek to involve wider forces
3. To take local initiatives such as sit-ins to demand an expansion of services

## **7. The Hidden Agenda of Integration and Cohesion – North East**

Conference deplores the notions that: differences in ethnicity and cultural heritage between communities are a threat; that they need to be minimised; and that our society is becoming more segregated because of them.

Furthermore we reject all policies predicated on those notions; from those that masquerade under the banner of promoting community cohesion, to those that openly condemn the assertion of personal and community identity.

Such notions offer a convenient rationale for reducing resources that address the needs of minority ethnic communities, which compounds the discrimination and inequality experienced by those groups. They also encourage scapegoating, and Government propaganda for its "War On Terror" has exploited them to the point where the expression of racist attitudes, Islamophobia and the demonisation of asylum seekers have all been legitimised.

### **Conference notes that:**

- i) The last decade has seen broad campaigns against racist abuse in football;
- ii) There has however been an increase in Islamophobia in the media and in football recently;
- iii) The Nazi BNP use Islamophobia to create fear and division in our communities;

iv) As a North East based organisation, and some of us as Newcastle United season ticket holders, we expressed our total condemnation of some of the Newcastle United fans in their Islamophobic chanting directed at the Middlesbrough striker, Mido, at the game on Sunday 26 August 2007. We did this by working with local & national anti-racist groups and trade unions in sending a joint letter to local as well as national newspapers. This met with a positive response. However, no action has been taken against those responsible by either Newcastle United FC or the Premier League.

**Conference also notes the opposition of Voice4Change England to the proposals in Annex D of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion report 'Our Shared Future' for being:**

- Racist and discriminatory to black and minority ethnic groups;
- Contrary to building cohesive communities;
- Not recognising the needs of diverse communities.

**Conference resolves:**

- To continue to campaign vigorously against racism and Islamophobia
- To support campaigns that expose and oppose the ideas and policies that are creating a climate of fear, foster hatred and lead to disastrous consequences for the most vulnerable people in our society
- To urge Respect groups across the UK to seek out and work with all appropriate organisations (e.g. "Unite Against Fascism", "Kick It Out", "Show Racism the Red Card" and Voice4Change England) with the aim of combating all forms of racism wherever it appears.

## **8. Domestic Violence - Lancashire**

Conference notes that Domestic Violence/abuse:

- Affects 1 in 4 women in their life time
- Is the second highest violent crime in the UK;
- Has the highest rate of repeat victimisation of any crime
- Is massively under-reported to the police
- Results in 2 women being killed by their partner or ex-partner every week
- Is the second or third highest reason for homelessness
- Results in many children under-achieving at school
- Costs England and Wales £23b per year to the state, the economy and the victim
- Is a hidden crime and is often condoned by society
- Knows no discrimination and affects women from all backgrounds

Conference further notes that whilst the Government says the tackling of domestic violence/abuse is a high priority very little funding is provided for services to support victims. The vast majority of such services are provided by the voluntary sector and yet they have no security of funding. Conference also notes that women fleeing domestic violence/abuse, who have entered the UK as a spouse of a British citizen, are not allowed to claim benefits during their probationary period.

Conference resolves:

- That funding for the voluntary sector domestic violence/abuse services should be put onto a statutory basis.
- That women with no recourse to public funds fleeing domestic violence/abuse should be entitled to welfare benefits whilst their immigration application is considered.
- To support campaigns on these issues.

## **9. Children, Schools and Families – West London**

Conference notes the significance of two new government departments replacing the previous DfES, and sees this as further evidence of the state's need to control greater areas of our lives.

Conference believes that the social and welfare questions relating to the place of children, schools and families in contemporary society are both a proper and urgent matter for RESPECT. This is largely because both workers and education service-users have to manage daily a stark contradiction – the desire for greater social cohesion in an era of increasing inequality.

Conference notes that UK wealth disparities are at pre-Second World War levels. The top 3% of residents command as much as the bottom 50%. Yet schools are increasingly the sole community hub in many areas where workplaces, post offices, GP surgeries and even pubs are disappearing. Child poverty is at wholly unacceptable levels. Teachers are now routinely expected to address a litany of social need well beyond that of education itself.

Despite incessant propaganda to the contrary, Conference believes that above all the UK is a society riven by class and we must state clearly that such inequality is offensive, especially when reproduced in our schools and colleges. Further divisions by gender, ability and ethnicity – in terms of access, pay and career development - accentuate these inequalities.

Conference believes that without our vigilant scrutiny the extension of state schooling to 18, whilst acceptable in itself, could exacerbate a role for schools as reproducers and legitimisers of social inequalities.

Conference therefore accepts that RESPECT has a duty to campaign for a much more equal society in which children and families can flourish. This requires measures to end the class system, not ones to cope with it. The consequences of not doing so include the perpetuation of ignorance, under-achievement and disaffection by learners.

Thus Conference recognises, for example, that a more student-centred system of education, starting from concerns about child development rather than market needs, would encourage learners of all ages to participate positively in society. We also regret the curriculum changes heralded by the 2006 Education and Inspections Act which return much 14-19 provision to a former divide between “technical” and “grammar” students.

Conference also recognises the predominantly negative portrayal of young people by the media. Reports of extreme violence committed by very few are often cited as evidence of a general malaise amongst teenagers, whilst 25 years of continual exam successes are used as evidence of poorer academic standards! Conference wholeheartedly rejects such stereotyping in the firm knowledge that young people are caring, hard working and keen to do well.

Conference also notes that the incidence of teenagers receiving Anti-Social Behaviour Orders is in inverse proportion to the local availability of affordable and safe recreational and study opportunities.

Finally, Conference believes that educational provision for all ages is best served by a core ethos of co-operation rather than competition. This cannot be achieved through an adoption of the neoliberal ethics of free-market capitalism.

Accordingly, RESPECT Conference agrees to:

1. Campaign for the introduction of study grants from the age of 16, and the removal of tuition fees at all levels.
2. Oppose the trend towards bigger secondary school provision, often as City Academies, because of the known negative impacts of such large schools.
3. Renew campaigns for the abolition of SATs and League Tables, and the return of direct LA control of schools including City Academies.
4. Campaign with education unions for an overhaul of teacher training which would retain various areas of expertise rather than develop a simple generic qualification for all those working with children.
5. Contest government plans for the homogenisation of training, qualifications, pay and conditions of the 4 million strong Childrens Workforce.
6. Call for the extention of funding for Extended Schools beyond 2008 as an increased whole school grant.
7. Convene a RESPECT Education group of volunteer workers and users to provide policy and action campaign support to the National Council
8. Seek active partnership with those unions, community groups and young people's organisations that campaign for increased rights and social, welfare, recreational and study provision via publicly-funded and managed services.

## **10. Academies - Lancashire**

Conference notes:

1. The Government's intention to expand its school city academy plans – to reach a target of 400 academies in England and Wales.
2. Academies remove schools from the control of local education authorities.
3. Academies are not subject to any direct democratic control or accountability.
4. As part of academy agreements 'sponsors' are given complete and effective control over the school. Existing sponsors include private companies, religious organisations and 'private benefactors'.
5. The Government are now encouraging Private schools and Universities to become 'sponsors' of city academies.

6. On becoming an academy, schools are given preferential access to the Building Schools for the Future funding stream. This provides public funds to rebuild schools which are, by then, under private control. The average cost of each school is £35 million, thus more than £14 bn of public resource will be transferred into the hands of private sponsors under the Government's proposals.
7. Sponsors are free to determine school entrance qualifications, curriculum matters, uniform and teachers' pay and conditions.
8. Academies effectively give private organisations control over public funds – a key form of welfare privatisation under New Labour.

Conference further notes:

1. The opposition of all the main teaching unions to the academy programme.
2. The existence of the broad coalition the 'Anti-Academies Alliance' with support from teaching unions, local campaign groups and a number of Labour MPs.

Conference resolves:

1. To make anti-academies work a central part of Respect's campaigning activity over the next year.
2. To encourage Respect councillors to work in conjunction with councillors from other parties to introduce appropriate 'anti academies' motions to their council.
3. To affiliate to the Anti-Academies Alliance.

## **11. The Building Schools for the Future Plan - Waltham Forest**

Respect recognises the need for significant improvement in vocational skills training on offer in the UK, but rejects the government vision of education proposed in the 14-19 vocational agenda both on educational and economic grounds, especially if there is any tying of the agenda to funding under the BSF (Building Schools for the Future) plan. The BSF plan means that schools may not receive funding for necessary refurbishing unless they agree fully to the governments terms. Most worrying is the government's plan to push up to 40% of students into vocational courses by 2013. Funding under this system will depend too much on schools complying with this and pushing students into vocational courses at an early age when many will be uncertain about the vocation that they want to follow.

Respect notes that the courses planned to come into existence from between 2008 and 2013 are based on a particular industry sector: Health and Social Care; Public Services; Land Based and Environment; Engineering; Manufacturing; Construction and the Built Environment; Information and Communication Technology; Retail; Hospitality and Catering; Hair and Beauty; Sport and Leisure; Travel and Tourism; Creative and Media; Business Administration and Finance.

The courses are very specific and will narrow down choice for many students at a time when they should be receiving a good general education and learning skills that will enable them to have more choice in the future. In short, these courses are likely to stifle the aspirations of many working class students and rule out them entering higher education. It is through higher education that many such students in the past have been able to aim far higher than the jobs available at the end of the vocational courses.

Respect believes that schools funding should not have these strings attached and that funding should be based on the needs of the school students, which should be decided in the most democratic way possible within each school, free of government pressure and agendas.

Respect calls on its members to oppose the BSF vocational vision and campaign against it at every opportunity. In its place we demand no strings attached funding for schools based on the needs of its students and decided in the most democratic way at local and school level.

## **12. School and College Governing Bodies - Harlow**

This branch notes that the governance of primary, secondary schools and colleges of Further Education is deeply flawed with regard to the appointment and accountability of Boards of Governors. There is extremely little democracy and virtually no public accountability which ensures that Boards of Governors are very much a law unto themselves. We acknowledge that the majority of school/college governors do act in the best interests of pupils' education and staff interests. However local experience campaigning against the closure/ relocation of Passmores secondary school in Harlow plus the educational mayhem current at Harlow College teaches us that Governing bodies have no statutory duty to publicly account and moreover are mostly not subject to any democratic election.

This Conference therefore calls for the Development of Education Policy to include provision for the democratic election and statutory duty of regular public accountability for the Governing bodies of all Educational establishments.

## **13. Mental Health -Kent**

### **Conference notes:**

- The massive reduction of the provision of in-patient psychiatric services since the Care in the Community Act 1990.
- While the rhetoric of this programme of closures was about reinvesting resources in to community based mental health support, in fact very little of the savings were retained within mental health while the 'selling off of the family silver' went someway toward enabling the massive cuts in public spending under the last Tory government and the tax cuts they introduced for their rich crony's.

- This programme has continued into the current Labour government that continues to close psychiatric hospital beds and talks of improving community services, such as in East Kent where 2 of the current 3 sites providing in-patient care for adults of working age are to be closed with the loss of 50 beds and the centralising of services serving an area of 722 sq. miles.
- The recent amendment to mental health law allows for people with mental health needs to be treated compulsorily in their own homes in spite of massive opposition from services and staff groups providing mental health care, many commenting that the use of compulsion will make mental health services less effective and people subject to them more dangerous.

#### **Conference demands:**

- An increase in resources to mental health services including developing psychological services, self-help opportunities and therapeutic activities as well as adequate in-patient provision.
- No further reduction in in-patient services unless they are demonstrably not needed i.e. not being used before they are withdrawn.
- A restriction in the use of compulsion to clinical settings only, where the patient can be effectively monitored and supported.

#### **14. Rail Transport - The Case for Nationalisation - Kent**

##### **- Financial (Tax)**

Passenger rail currently split into 23 Train Operating Companies (TOCs) plus Network Rail maintaining tracks and signalling and two freight companies. Tax payers subsidies to TOCs alone currently cost more than British Rail cost to run and are increasing exponentially – 2005/6 saw £1,082,500,000 paid in subsidies, nearly doubled in 2006/7 to £2,017,600,000. Some TOCs saw their subsidies more than double, some even triple. (SET from £50,700,000 to £144,900,000, SWT from £50,700,000 to £123,000,000, Scotrail from £118,900,000 to £275,000,000, Virgin West Coast from £92,500,000 to £221,300,000). Thus the subsidy paid to TOCs is greater than the cost of the entire nationalised rail network. Where does this money go? Reinvested in rail services? It goes to TOC shareholders. Many TOCs take little or no financial risk in running their service risk. Some operators run on a cost plus basis, where their subsidy is higher than their running costs. They are effectively being paid by the government to run a service where the government is picking up the cost of running that service.

##### **- Financial (Fares)**

The cost of fares has also increased exponentially. SWT and Arriva Wales saw fare increases last year of 20% and 34% respectively. Other operators running into north London have tried to abolish off peak fares. Whilst passenger numbers increase, operators seem hellbent on squeezing more and more profit from their passengers. The UK now has the highest rail fares in Europe. Under BR we were amongst the lowest.

**- Environmental**

The average small car produces 29,000g of CO<sub>2</sub> in an hour. An electric train in the south east produces 1,770g in an hour. A car can carry four people, a train between 1,000 and 1,500. A diesel train produces 5 times more pollution than a truck, yet can carry 20 times the load. The figures speak for themselves. Rail transport is environmentally much more desirable to road transport yet this government has continued and sometimes expanded its road building, yet pays scant regard to rail, pumping in more money not to expand the network, simply to increase TOCs profit margins. The introduction of regenerative braking on Virgin Trains, reducing electricity usage, is a further step in making trains more environmentally friendly, yet no other TOC has followed suit.

**- Safety (Tracks)**

The recent Grayrig train crash in Cumbria was caused by Network Rail failing to inspect the track properly. Why? Lack of investment. The government is quite happy to throw billions at the TOCs yet is unwilling to give Network Rail what they say they need to manage the tracks. In 2003 Network Rail said they needed £34,000,000,000 to effectively maintain the network. The rail regulator recommended they be given £24,000,000,000. Gordon Brown actually gave them £22,700,000,000. Network Rail as a private company is unable to maintain the network effectively, contracting out much of their work to companies such as Jarvis and Balfour Beatty. This situation is placing both passengers and railstaff at risk of another Grayrig. In a country where the train was invented we have only managed to build one new line in the last 50 years.

**- Safety (Trains)**

The removal of Guards from metropolitan services around London has coincided with an increase in on train crime against passengers including assault, robbery and vandalism. The institution of “Driver Operated Only” (DOO) routes through south east and south London has resulted in a loss of jobs for rail employees, an increased workload for train drivers and on some jointed trains, a situation where passengers have no access to a member of staff. The new high speed service in the south east is now rumoured to be DOO, extended DOO by stealth into Kent. Whilst we applaud the efforts of the RMT to halt the extension of DOO on SWT, the whole concept of DOO must be questioned. The role of the guard / conductor / on train manager must not be run down at the cost of train safety and passenger confidence.

**- Policing**

The current system of policing for the rail network is obsolete and inefficient. British Transport Police currently have responsibility for policing the rail network throughout England, Scotland and Wales and for the London Underground. BTP is paid for jointly by the TOCs and the government, giving private companies a financial stakehold in law enforcement. BTP is gradually being cut back when rail passengers and rail crime against both passengers and staff are increasing. BTPs control centres are being cut from 8 to 2. Kent has over 90 train stations yet has only one BTP station, not even centrally located at Ashford. With Eurostar services at Ashford being run down what is the future of this station? The establishment of the new role of Rail Enforcement Officer (REO) is nothing more than a stop gap. These officers are effectively BTPs version of Community Support Officers, or “Plastic Policemen” as they are know. However, REOs are not employed by BTP but by the TOCs,

furthering their grip on law enforcement on the railway. Staff now feel that they are the ones being policed, not the public.

**We ask that RESPECT work towards the following points;**

1 - That all TOCs and Network Rail be brought under public ownership along their current organisational lines and that they be run on a cost effective basis with profits being reinvested in services.

2 – That subcontracting out of railway work to private firms be banned and the work be brought back in house.

3 – That fare increases be capped at the rate of inflation plus 1% to bring British fares back in line with Europe and make them more competitive with road transport.

4 – That the practice of instituting “Driver Operated Only” services be ended and the role of the train guard re-established.

5 – That British Transport Police and the establishment of Rail Enforcement Officers be abolished and that policing of the rail network be taken over by special “Rail Units” drawn from local police forces funded by central and local government.

6 – That a special government commission be set up, consisting of rail experts with input from ASLEF, TSSA and RMT to consider the expansion of the rail network throughout the country.

**15. Promotion of flying and misconceptions about public transport - York**

**Respect Notes**

1. It is a common belief that trains fares are more expensive air fares.
2. Typical long distance journeys within the British Isles do not start or end in the vicinity of airports.
3. Travelling to or from an airport by surface public transport will typically involve travelling through the relevant city centre.
4. British train fares are typically less than air fares, when the cost of travel to and from airports is included.
5. There have been numerous false or misleading claims in the media that British trains are expensive. This includes reports by the BBC, Holiday Which? and on the Respect web site.
6. Common errors in comparing costs of public transport include comparing airport to airport journeys with city-centre to city-centre journeys, ignoring air passenger duty, comparing advance purchase air fares with immediate travel train fares, ignoring costs of driving, other than fuel and ignoring accommodation costs.
7. Left wing organisations including Respect branches have offered flights as competition prizes.

8. UK domestic air passenger traffic is falling.

#### Respect Believes

1. Offering flights as competition prizes is an effective means to promote air travel.
2. Falsely claiming that trains are more expensive than flying will lead to an increase in air travel.
3. Making false statements about public transport will lead the movement into making incorrect policy and strategy.

#### Respect Resolves

1. To cease making false or misleading claims that public transport is more expensive or dangerous than it actually is and to challenge such claims.
2. To not offer flights or any other excessively polluting form of transport as a prize in any raffle, lottery or competition unless the destination is of political significance.

### **16. Sleeper train services - York**

#### Respect Notes

1. A sleeper train is a train which travels on a journey lasting through one or more nights and is fitted with beds for the passengers to sleep in, and are typically divided up into compartments accommodating 1 to 8 people, 1 or 2 people per compartment in current British services.
2. The fares for sleeper trains are often similar to air fares, once the saving in travel to and from airports and accommodation costs has been accounted for.
3. Sleeper trains provide a means of travelling long distances without flying or spending all day travelling.
4. There is widespread ignorance of the (continued) existence of sleeper trains.
5. Train operators fail to adequately advertise sleeper services, whereas adverts for flights are widespread. Fragmentation due to privatisation has worsened the problem, with different companies operating the daytime and sleeper services between London and Scotland, however nationalised railway companies are also guilty, with SNCF going to the extreme of advertising and selling competing flights on its (part-privatised) web site.
6. Attempts have been to withdraw many sleeper services, sometimes successfully.
  - London-Fort William (saved by campaigning)
  - London-Penzance (saved by campaigning except for the Plymouth portion)
  - Cornwall-Scotland
  - London-Paris (withdrawn before the construction of the channel tunnel)
  - Paris-Vienna (at one time ran to Istanbul, was cut down to Strasbourg-Vienna in June 2007)
7. Many train companies have a policy of enforced sex segregation in some or all types of sleeper compartment, unless an entire compartment is booked by a group.

8. Many people prefer to sleep in a mixed sex environment so that they can remain with their companions of the opposite sex. Examples of this include the Millennium Dome during the 2004 European Social Forum and community centres during Marxism (the annual event organised by the Socialist Workers Party).
9. Many people prefer sleep in a single sex environment.
10. As of 16<sup>th</sup> October, it is impossible to book via the internet, an opposite sex couple on London-Scotland sleeper trains sharing a compartment, if paying the more expensive fares.
11. There is a lack of showers at many stations served by sleeper trains.
12. Respect has a policy of reducing air travel.

#### Respect believes

1. Sex segregation policies amount to discrimination against heterosexual couples.
2. A major motivation for air travel is the perceived time saving, compared to other modes to transport.

#### Respect calls for

1. The restoration of the Cornwall-Scotland sleeper service.
2. The introduction of sleeper services from many parts of Britain to many parts of Europe, including Ireland by use of train ferries.
3. The adequate advertising of sleeper trains.
4. The adequate provision of showers at stations.
5. The option of booking single or mixed sex compartments.

### **17. Buses - Newham**

Respect notes the recent serious accidents involving buses and in particular London's 'bendy buses'. Respect believes that these are a symptom of an inadequate service and contempt for bus passengers on the part of transport companies and local authorities.

Respect condemns raids on buses by poice, ticket inspectors and immigration officials, believing them to be infringements of civil liberties targeted against the poor.

Respect reaffirms its commitment to safe, reasonably priced and comfortable public transport. In particular it calls for the withdawal of bendy buses and the return of two person operated buses in the interests of safety and public service.

### **18. Congestion Charging – Cambridgeshire**

Respect notes:

We reaffirm the importance of Respect's call for re-nationalisation of public transport

and the creation of a well funded fully integrated transport system, and we wish Respect to encourage continued debate and progress on local, national and international solutions to transport.

We would argue that the introduction of further flat-rate congestion charge zones and other road pricing schemes unfairly penalise working people and do not solve emission levels. At best, the charge will free up some roads for the wealthy, at worst merely shift congestion into different places. We all need carefully considered planning of integrated and low cost well-resourced public transport, including substantial redevelopment of rail links, and continued support for cyclists and pedestrians. This needs to be clearly linked to calls for a major programme of council house building, so that people have a genuine choice to live nearer work, and in line with other well thought out long term public infrastructure strategy. The key is to ensure that people can travel safely, reliably and cheaply when and where they want and need to without having to rely on a car.

Respect therefore:

Opposes the use of congestion charging as the precondition for any investment in local transport systems. Where congestion is an issue more thorough-going solutions need to be sought, and rationing or car exclusion zones need to be considered. The technology used to run the congestion charge schemes could be used to ration car use on the basis of need instead. People who have a greater need to use cars - the disabled, some pensioners, parents of younger children, some workers doing essential jobs - could be given free permits. Any concession to congestion charge policies should be weighted towards the needy and not the wealthy, and should be part of a wider attempt to develop genuinely accessible public solutions to transport.

## **19. LGBT Rights – North Birmingham**

Conference notes:

Respect's commitment to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender(LGBT) rights through its policies, campaigns and candidates.

Conference resolves:

1. To have a National Respect intervention in the London Pride events next year and encourage local groups to intervene in Pride events in their areas.
2. To work, along with Student Respect, to build progressive, radical LGBT campaigns.
3. To continue producing leaflets that outline Respect's defence of LGBT rights for use in local campaigning.

## **20. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) rights - Respect North East**

This Conference Notes

- Homophobia in schools all too often goes unchecked, with staff at times ignoring homophobic remarks made by pupils. However, the work of the NUT and other bodies in combating hate in schools should be noted.
- Youth support groups lack of political support & funding, and are not valued by local authorities for the services they provide.
- That ban on gay men giving blood, at a time when there continues to be a national shortage of blood donation, and the current campaigns for the ban to be overturned.
- The legal advances that the LGBT community have made in recent years in the fight for civil rights.
- Respect's current position on LGBT Rights as seen in election manifestos.
- Respect's presence on London Gay Pride 2007, which was very successful.

#### This Conference Believes

- Homophobia needs to be challenged whether in schools, workplaces or in our communities.
- Gay youth support groups provide a vital service and should be recognised for the role they play, especially since life as a young LGBT person can still be difficult, with many people facing bullying, mental health issues, alcohol and drug problems as well as financial issues.
- The ban on gay men giving blood is wholly unjustified and should be overturned.
- That although equal legal status has been reached, the fight for equality is only just beginning to make gay equality a reality in our society.
- That the use of the word 'gay' to signify something is bad is clearly wrong and people who use it, e.g. Chris Moyles and Jeremy Clarkson, should be sacked by the BBC.
- That the organisers and participants of the Respect intervention on the London Gay Pride should be congratulated on the successful Respect presence and that Respect should have a presence on all Gay Pride events where possible.
- That Respect should continue to stand for equality and should set out our manifesto policies in more detail.

#### This Conference Resolves

- That the national office should produce a general double sided A4 leaflet setting out Respect's position on LGBT issues for use on Gay Pride events and other interventions, such as the TUC LGBT conference, as well as for use in local activities.
- To charge the national office with organising our intervention in next year's London Gay Pride, to approach the organisers of the event with a view to having a speaker at

the rally, and to encourage Respect groups locally to take part in their respective pride events.

- That Respect should be commenting on political events within the LGBT community, especially since other political organisations within the LGBT community have fallen silent.
- That we should support any organisation which aims to tackle homophobia in schools. That we should support the NUS campaign to overturn the ban on gay men donating blood, and the unfair regulations on financial support in Universities and Colleges, which do not support LGBT students financially when they have been disowned by their parents.
- That Respect should adopt policy that would make each local authority have a legal responsibility to provide support specifically for young LGBT people in the form of youth support groups which should be properly funded, staffed and promoted.

## **21. Respect and LGBT rights - Southwark**

### **Conference Notes:**

1. Respect's commitment to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) rights through its policies, campaigns and candidates.
2. That Respect's intervention at the 500,000-strong Pride London event this summer was a success.
3. That Respect members distributed a leaflet, produced specifically for the Pride event, to 7,000 people, setting out Respect's message of equality and commitment to defending LGBT rights.
4. The impact Student Respect had at the recent National Union of Students LGBT conference, arguing for a broad and radical campaign for LGBT liberation.

### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To have a National Respect intervention in the London Pride events next year and encourage local groups to intervene in Pride events in their areas.
2. To work, along with Student Respect, to build progressive, radical LGBT campaigns.
3. To continue producing leaflets that outline Respect's defence of LGBT rights and to urge local groups to distribute them at events in their areas."

## **22. Taxation – West London**

Conference notes with disgust that the Labour and Conservative parties are competing with each other to see who can propose to tax the best-off people the least.

Conference therefore calls upon Respect's leadership to set up a working party to draft a raft of re-distributive taxation proposals in time to be included in our manifesto for the next election.

These could include some of the following:

- 1) A lower threshold for inheritance tax

- 2) Capital gains tax imposed on the sale of all homes over a certain value, including owners' sole or primary accommodation
- 3) Higher rates of tax on a sliding scale on those earning more than £100,000 a year
- 4) A wealth tax on a sliding scale on personal fortunes exceeding 100 times the national average wage. (Circa two and a half million pounds at present)
- 5) Luxury sales taxes on a range of extremely expensive goods and services
- 6) A new tax on very high residential rentals
- 7) New council tax bands at the higher end of the scale and additional charges for those with two or more homes
- 8) New low tax rates and other measures to reduce the tax burden on the lowest paid and to exempt more people from paying tax at all

### **23. Legal Aid – Lewisham and Greenwich**

From 1 October 2007 fundamental changes were made to the way that ordinary people can access help and legal advice. Primarily these changes affect the way solicitors, Law Centres and advice agencies are funded for the work they carry out.

The Legal Services Commission (LSC), the government body which runs the Legal Aid budget has changed funding to a regime of Fixed Fees. The Fixed Fee is different for each of the categories of Social Welfare Law, but generally it equates to approximately three hours of work on each case, irrespective of how long the case takes to be resolved. There is a mechanism to claim some cases as “exceptional”, with payment three times the value of the Fixed Fee. The LSC anticipates that only 4% of cases will reach this exceptional threshold. This figure is expected to be 10% in London.

The average case time for a housing case in London is about five and a half hours. This means therefore any advice provider will not be paid for two of those hours advice given.

Many solicitors and other agencies say that they could reasonable expect almost all cases reaching this exceptional threshold as they deal with extremely vulnerable clients, particularly those with physical and mental health problems or learning difficulties, and those whose first language is not English.

The concern is that solicitors, Law Centres and advice agencies will provide quick advice and avoid long and complex cases. The LSC has also put a threshold on this type of advice to 20% of all cases.

This potentially means that agencies will “cherry pick” clients and cases that match their expected profile. This will be monitored by the LSC to see if the agency is considered to be working to the LSC’s expectations and that they will be allowed to keep their contract.

This means the most vulnerable people in society with the most difficult and complex problems could be turned away and left without legal advice and representation. In terms of housing, this means that landlords will evict helpless people with rent arrears, avoid statutory obligations to re-house vulnerable people and continue to

leave properties and estates in disrepair. With respect to immigration, this means that asylum seekers, fleeing torture and persecution, will be open to deportation without recourse to advice and resources to live on while still in the UK. It means that sick and disabled people will be unable to access help in claiming state benefits or the ability to appeal when these benefits are taken away.

Worse is likely to follow as the Fixed Fee regime is simply a pre-cursor to competitive tendering. Some have already handed back Legal Aid contracts as the Fixed Fee regime is simply financially untenable. This is likely to mean that many towns and cities will be advice deserts where there is no advice provision for certain categories of law.

The Legal Services Commission itself is not immune from the government's attempts at cut backs in the Civil Service. It is suggested that possibly 700 jobs are earmarked for redundancy out of a department of 1700 in the near future.

The New Labour government has introduced more than 700 new criminal offences since 1997. This has led to increased Legal Aid spending as more and more people are in need of legal advice and representation

This conference congratulates:

The Law Society in winning its Judicial Review action against the Legal Services Commission, forcing it to halt the changes in Criminal Legal Aid contracts.

This conference condemns:

The Government's attempts to make vulnerable people pay for cuts in the Legal Aid budget, whether this is the low paid, benefit claimants, asylum seekers, advice workers, social welfare lawyers or civil servants.

This conference resolves:

To oppose the Government's introduction of the Fixed Fee regime and to that demand it fully resource both Criminal and Civil Legal Aid with a budget that will expand to meet demand in all areas;

To support solicitors, Law Centres and advice agencies in any opposition they take against the Fixed Fee regime and plans to introduce competitive tendering.

To support Civil Servants at the Legal Services Commission in any fight to protect Jobs.

To call on RESPECT Councillors to raise questions and propose motions to defend advice services within their borough.

To request that RESPECT MP(s) sponsor an Early Day Motion in Parliament on this subject, similar to the one initiated by Keith Vaz MP on the 19 July 2007, Early Day Motion 1961 on Legal Aid Regulations, which was sponsored and supported by 65 MPs.

## 24. Carers – Lewisham and Greenwich

Conference notes:

- 1 That millions of carers are living at or below the poverty line.
- 2 That millions of carers are subject to means testing for their Carer's Allowance.
- 3 That carers who want to work are often unable to do so because of the lack of good quality and safe day centres and respite care provisions.
- 4 That the good will of carers is exploited by successive Governments.
- 5 That a report by Carers UK shows that the value of unpaid work by carers is £87 billion per year, more than the entire spend on the NHS of £82 billion in 2006 - 7.
- 6 That those in need of care who are from BME communities can face double and even triple discrimination (if they also happen to fore-ground a Muslim identity).

The conference resolves:

- 1 To call for benefit provisions and allowances that at least meet the European standard for minimum wages.
- 2 To ensure that the cared for are not forced to accept standards of service that do not meet their needs and aspirations.
- 3 That services for the cared for and their carers are properly and adequately funded.
- 4 That services are inclusive and respond to the needs of all sections of the cared for and their carers.

## 25. The Olympics - Newham

The principle to be followed in the London Olympics 2012 development must be that investment prioritises the legacy of a regenerated East London and not the profit of corporate sponsors.

For this to happen we believe that:

- a) Democratic accountability structures must be set up:
  - i) The Olympic Development Authority (ODA) must incorporate elected councillors and representatives of a broad spectrum of community organisations including Defend Council Housing, TELCO and strong representation from the Communities from the 5 London Host Boroughs.
  - ii) The ODA must publish quarterly reports open to public scrutiny; these reports to include financial accounts and a record of the development of public facilities, including facilities lost.
  - iii) Decisions involving changes of land use, e.g. the concreting of Hackney Marshes to provide a coach-park, the concreting of allotments, etc. should be subject to the normal due legal process of public consultation.
- b) Minimum economic standards must be met:
  - i) The East London Community Organisation (TELCO) statement of economic guarantees should be adhered to these include: a London living wage to all workers on

Olympic projects, a construction academy in East London, London Labour Clause, the allocation of land for affordable housing to be transferred to a Community Trust Land (CLT). The provision of a CLT - homes, was part of the London Citizens Ethical Olympics

ii) We would add to this that: all work should be paid and not voluntary, that all workers should be unionised and the ODA should liaise regularly with union representatives to ensure this.

iii) that a minimum of 50% of housing built as part of the Olympic regeneration is council housing.

c) With regard to sports facilities we should ensure that full regard is given to the provision of local facilities for long-term East London residents' use. These facilities are to be retained for the use of improving long term health and fitness, and not for the provision of short-term elite sports usage. Facilities should take into account information with regard to local residents needs and incomes and where necessary conduct independent surveys.

d) With regard to security for the Games we note the plans to use armed forces, we oppose any use of armed personnel and do not regard such use as enhancing the safety of residents or audiences.

## **26. Trade Unions and Political Representation - Dudley**

This Branch / Conference notes:

1. that the Trade Union movement created the Labour Party in order to achieve a political voice.
2. that 100 years later there is an increasing tension between the Labour party and the Trade Unions and therefore an emerging crisis of trade union political representation. The FBU has disaffiliated, the RMT is outside the Labour Party and questions are beginning to be raised in a number of trade unions.
3. Whilst the question of trade union representation is emerging Trade Unions are becoming increasingly more involved with political issues and campaigns such as Stop the War Coalition, Unite Against Fascism and climate change.

This Branch / Conference believes:

1. That the neo-liberal and privatisation agenda of New Labour under Gordon Brown will further exacerbate the tensions between Labour and the Trade Unions.
2. that the attacks on working people, whether it be through public sector pay cuts, the closure of schools and other local services through marketisation, or by attacking pensions – all add to an emerging bitterness between ordinary trade union members and the Labour Party.
3. that over the forthcoming years Respect should aim to become the home of all disillusioned trade unionists and trade union bodies.

This Branch /Conference therefore resolves:

1. To continue the Organising For Fighting Trade Unions initiative with each locality seeking to establish organisations that can deliver solidarity between different trade unions as industrial struggles arise.
2. that wherever Respect stands in the forthcoming elections (General Election, GLA elections, council elections) Respect should write to all Trade Union Branches and bodies both offering support and solidarity as well as requesting support.
3. Respect should also issue an ‘appeal’ leaflet to all trade union members urging them to join an organisation that will challenge the neo-liberal agenda of New Labour.
4. Respect should continue to intervene at trade union conferences and continue to make supportive statements of trade unions in struggle.

## **27. Organising for Fighting Unions – South Manchester**

In Manchester the Respect initiative “Organising for Fighting Unions” (OFFU) has been a real success.

Our local meeting organised after the success of the national conference produced one of the biggest trade union activists meeting in Manchester in many years. As well as cementing a relationship of leading activists working together for trade union rights in the city it provided a fraternal debate on whether trade unions should continue to financially support the Labour Party.

This work was further strengthened by Respect activists being at the heart of two major disputes in the city and allowed us to establish unifying rallies bringing workers from different disputes and unions together.

Successful disputes have taken place at Fujuiustu, Community & Mental Health Nurses and Salford Bin workers in recent months. Respect’s work in this area is key to establishing a strong trade union base in our organisation.

This unity is currently being tested by the attempt to discipline Karen Reissmann by the Chief Executive of Manchester Mental Health Board .The charges against her are for her speaking out as a trade unionist against cuts in service and privatisation. Manchester community and mental health unison members have taken 9 one day strikes in her defence and have been supported by trade unionists across the city and nationally.

Respect has a vital role to play in giving a political voice to trade unionists. We must aim to become a party that stands up for working peoples rights. We must continue to approach trade unions at every level to support parties that support their policies. We must continue to take initiatives that allow us to fight alongside trade unionists for peace, justice and equality.

### **Organising for Fighting Unions - OFFU**

1. notes both the growing number of national and local disputes in recent months, particularly around the government's pay freeze, and the high level of rank and file involvement as demonstrated by the large numbers of pickets.

2. considers the establishment of Organising for Fighting Unions very timely, with the success of the founding conference sustained by regional events such as the well attended meeting in Manchester with Billy Hayes speaking.
3. recognises that Gordon Brown's backing for the management in the Royal Mail dispute has led to many postal workers questioning whether their union should be funding the Labour Party, strengthening the debate in many unions about the political fund and Labour Party affiliation.
4. resolves to make OFFU a priority of our work in the coming year, in particular, arguing to democratise political funds so that money can be given to MPs and parties who actually support the union's battles.

## **28. Organising for Fighting Unions – Wandsworth and Merton**

This conference re-affirms its support for Organising for Fighting Unions (OFU). This Conference notes the founding conference of OFU brought together over 800 trade union activists from across the labour movement and several General Secretaries, including Respect supporter Mark Serwotka, united in their desire to tackle the privatisation policies of Gordon Brown and his attempts to impose a pay freeze. Since then, OFU has initiated several successful regional gathering of activists to engender the widest possible support for people at the front line of Brown's attacks e.g.: striking postal workers, Remploy workers, Manchester Health workers.

This Conference believes that Respect needs to continue to play a full part in promoting and building more OFU events and activities, alongside others such as Public Service not Private Profit, in order to promote the widest possible solidarity and the greatest possible effectiveness of the labour movement.

## **29. Organising for Fighting Unions - Camden and Barnet**

Conference recognises the launching of Organising for Fighting Unions at last year's trade union conference to have been one of Respect's most important initiatives. At a time of growing public sector militancy, the National Council is urged to give consideration to the following possible measures aimed at developing the organisation and enabling it to respond to the new mood of rank-and-file combativity:

1. Setting up Respect fractions within the different public sector unions, enabling them to unite increasing numbers of fellow workers in action, and to put maximum pressure on the union executives to stand firm. These fractions should, of course, link up with and act as part of the existing left within the unions, but retain the ability to act independently where necessary.
2. Setting up regional Organising for Fighting Unions committees that would link up wherever possible with local trades councils and union branches so as to maximise any action being taken and build support for groups of workers in dispute.

3. In the event of major struggles erupting during the coming autumn and winter, Respect members should raise within OFFU the possibility of a recall national trade union conference to build or broaden solidarity with those groups.

### **30. Respect and the trade unions – Waltham Forest**

1. Respect believes that the recent post strike, the victory of the Metronet workers on the London Underground and the prospect of strike action against Gordon Brown's pay freeze by 800,000 local government workers suggest that there is likely to be a marked increase in industrial struggle in the coming months.
2. We believe that one of the major issues in the post strike, as in other recent disputes, is the continuing commitment of the trade union leaders to New Labour. This repeatedly leads them to try to hold back or call off strike action and settle disputes unnecessarily on less favourable terms for fear of clashing with the Labour leadership.
3. Respect further believes that this conflict between the unions' commitment to the Labour Party and interests of their members is becoming increasingly clear to activists and ordinary members. One of the key arguments raised by postal workers during their dispute was the £500,000 donated by the Communication Workers Union to the Labour Party. Respect is the only credible organisation which can both argue for the democratisation of the political fund and pose itself as a serious alternative for funding.
4. We believe that this represents a great opportunity for Respect to increase our support and influence in the trade unions. Our constitution states that we are "a campaigning organisation, involved in trade union and workplace struggle". However to win the support of trade unionists, we need to develop our ability to intervene more effectively in industrial struggles.
5. Respect notes that during the post strike, our leaflet was aimed primarily at raising solidarity with the postal workers. This was useful if visiting the picket line once, but insufficient to intervene on a regular basis.
6. We therefore resolve:
  - (a) That in a national dispute such as the postal workers' strike, Respect should be able to produce regular bulletins carrying reports by workers from across the country and engaging in the arguments about the best tactics to win the dispute.
  - (b) To continue our full support for Organising For Fighting Unions as means of supporting industrial disputes, intervening in the debate on the use of the trade unions' political funds and winning support for Respect in the unions.

### **30. Trade Unions - Sheffield**

Sheffield Respect recognises the success of the Organising for Fighting Trade Unions (OFFU) initiative in beginning to expand support within the organised working class.

OFFU has started to reconnect with a layer of trade unionists as demonstrated in the national conference of 1,000 delegates and a Sheffield rally attended by 80 trade unionists and activists from campaigns including anti-privatisation battles in education and the NHS.

The post strikes show that the discontent over the relationship between the unions and New Labour is crucial and growing unrest over public sector pay is further evidence that Respect's work around the unions must be a priority.

### **31. Building Respect for the Future – National Council**

Brown's reactionary neoliberal government is more anti-working class than those led by Tony Blair. His public sector wages policy is the biggest attack on the trade unions in 10 years. His proposals "extending and renewing party democracy" will wipe out whatever residual influence the trade unions have at Labour Party conference and deepen the crisis of labour representation. His appointment of people like Digby Jones to Government positions and his invitation of Thatcher to number 10 are calculated insults to the labour movement.

The excellent Shadwell result shows that the objective conditions which produced Respect are unchanged. The need for a new pluralist party to the left of Labour is stronger now that it was when Respect was launched. The Labour left, after the failure of the McDonnell campaign, is weaker now than at any time in its history.

Respect has improved its electoral results consistently over the last 3 years but there is still a gap between our support and our paid up membership. We need to take action to close this gap and to encourage a strong branch structure.

We have to build Respect as a nationally based campaigning party with a strong public profile, radical policies, and strong internal democracy. Respect has to broaden its forces and build itself outwards if it is to become an effective left alternative. It has to relate to the Labour left after the collapse of McDonnell campaign and the left in the unions given the crisis of representation they face.

Conference notes that:

a) The RMT - the union that proposed the foundation of the Labour Party 100 years ago - is responding to the crisis of representation circulating its branches with the proposition that the union establishes an anti-privatisation political party for the purpose of standing candidates in the GLA elections.

b) That Rob Griffiths, general secretary of the CPB, has written in the Morning Star (10.9.07) that the emergence of the Brown government and his "extending and renewing party democracy" proposals threaten to put us back to the time when the Labour Party was founded. He concludes: "If the labour movement cannot or will not reclaim the LP from the privateers, the war mongers and the Thatcher fans, it will have to re-establish one."

Conference therefore resolves:

a) To welcome the initial discussions arranged with the CPB, Bob Wareing and the RMT and to urgently seek further discussions with those sections of the left currently

outside of Respect. In particular those who have continued to seek to reclaim the LP. These include the John McDonnell campaign, the Labour left and the CPB. These discussions to be on the basis of no organisational preconditions as far as Respect is concerned, with the aim of initiating a process towards a wider regroupment of left forces

b) To seek discussions with Bob Crow and others in the RMT left on the whole issue of the crisis of representation and the need for a new party, making it clear that we welcome the discussion on this question inside the RMT, which opens up an important political debate, and is a reflection of the crisis of representation. In order to avoid a split in the left vote in the GLA elections Respect should offer the best possible conditions to the RMT for a joint slate, which would also be a step forward towards a wider collaboration.

c) To discuss with the RMT, the Labour left, the CPB and others the possibility of a jointly organised conference to extend the discussion on a solution to the crisis of Labour representation.

d) To ensure that Respect plays an integral part in the struggle of the trade unions against the Brown wage freeze and the attack on trade union rights, and against privatisation and deregulation through OFFU and sectional meetings of Respect supporters in the various unions and working in other broad campaigns.

e) To continue to support the activities and campaigns of the StWC both in terms of opposition to the war and the defence of civil liberties and human rights.

f) To ensure that Respect gives a high profile to material on the environment and climate change in its election and general material. To become more involved in the climate change campaign and the climate camps and their activities. Support the climate change trade union conference.

In order to build Respect more effectively, conference resolves:

1) To ensure that Respect has clear working class politics in the coming election. This means that the ethos of Respect as expressed in its acronym Respect, Equality, Socialism, Peace, Environment, Community, Trade Unionism, has to be the framework of its work, its activities and its policies. Any left party wanting to make its mark under the current conditions will have to have clear and distinct and radical politics on which to build an election campaign.

2) To build a much higher public profile for Respect. To have an effective means of getting our ideas across through broad-sheets and leaflets, and an improved, revitalised website and improved media management with a well resourced press officer. We agree in principle to produce a newspaper or a magazine. This should be discussed by a working and brought back to the NC for implementation in the new year.

3) To improved connection with the branches in particular by making the national council a partly delegate body with delegates from branches plus an EC elected from conference as automatic members. (The incoming NC to discuss the details with a

view to introducing this after the 2008 conference).

Conference reaffirms the decisions taken by the NC on 22.9.07.

This National Council reaffirms the principles of pluralism and inclusivity enshrined in the founding of Respect and in our constitution:

"The aim of Respect is to build a broad-based and inclusive alternative to the parties of privatisation, war and occupation. We will do this by intervening in elections at national, local and European level, building Respect as a campaigning organisation, involved in trade union and workplace struggle, and by building local branches of Respect which are rooted in local campaigns and in the local labour movement."

We recognise that we continue to enjoy favourable conditions to strengthen and broaden our coalition and our support. To make the most of these conditions in the run-up to the London and council elections next May - and with the possibility of a general election in the next 12 months - we resolve to:

- a) Launch an immediate membership and fundraising from the national conference. For conference prepare a fundraising goal for each branch and work with the branches to appoint a fundraising officer. Announce at conference a series of recruitment rallies addressed by the MP, local councillors and other leading figures in Respect.
- b) Take a positive and collaborative approach to wider developments on the left, such as Bob Wareing's decision to stand in West Derby, and the discussion on electoral strategy inside the RMT and among other significant forces in the movement.
- c) Take urgent steps to ensure that the Executive Committee, which comprises the officers and others, is a balanced reflection of the organisation, including, if necessary, by expanding its numbers through election at this meeting.
- d) Instruct the Executive Committee to prioritise the inclusion of all its members through the prior circulation of agendas and papers for consultation, the varying of the date and venue of meetings to maximise participation, and the use of new technologies.
- e) Improve urgently internal communication and accountability at all levels.
- f) Overhaul our procedures for recruiting to paid posts in the organisation so that all posts are advertised within Respect, appointed through a short-listing and interview process overseen by a panel approved by the National Council, meet our equal opportunities aims, and are compatible with the best employment practice.
- g) Immediately establish a commission to draw up democratic and inclusive alternatives to the slate system for elections. The commission is to report its suggested replacement(s) to the slate system at conference 2007 and propose any necessary constitutional amendments.
- h) Review progress on these action points at the next National Council meeting.
- i) All elected representatives of Respect should give regular reports to the local Respect branch, and the National Council of Respect. All major initiatives should be discussed with the appropriate local and national committees of Respect.

The National Council encourages all branches and members to seize the growing opportunities we believe exist for building Respect and the wider movement. It is with that sense of urgency in mind that the National Council adopts these proposals, subject, of course, to ratification by the National Conference.

### **32. Building effective RESPECT branches – North Manchester and Bury**

The Conference notes;

1. The continuing need for a Left of Labour alternative to the Parties of Privatisation and war and the huge potential that Respect has to fill that gap in British political life.
2. In order to fulfil that potential we need to spread the lessons of our successes into wider areas of the country
3. That the constitution states that the basic unit of organisation within Respect is the Branch

The Conference believes that:

1. The centre of any Respect success is a vibrant, well organised, inclusive, outward looking and democratic branch
2. That Branches must provide a democratic forum for every member in their locality by meeting monthly as required by the constitution
3. That Branches should aim to provide a focus for political activity in their locality and attempt to deliver solidarity and links between different struggles locally, nationally and internationally

Conference further believes that successful branches should aim to:

1. Have regular public events including film shows, book stalls, solidarity fairs, public meetings etc.,
2. Have a Public Street presence including regular street stalls and door to door contact in the Branch's locality
3. Develop an electoral strategy relevant to the branch's locality
4. Develop a positive working relationship with local Trade Unionists and their branches.
5. Be involved in campaigning work inline with Respect's policies.
6. Produce and distribute publications such as ward/constituency newsletters, national policy leaflets and local and regional tabloids
7. Regular and effective fund raising events as an essential component of Respects National Fund Raising strategy
8. Annual elections of branch officers who will perform specific functions to ensure the strategy is implemented and will be accountable to the branch by regular reporting of their activities
9. Build an expanding membership base and co-operate with other neighbouring branches with the aim of expanding into new localities

### **33. Respect Structure - Dudley**

"We believe the existing organisational structure of Respect needs to change in order for Respect to develop to challenge the mainstream parties. Whilst issues in London

have dominated Respect nationally, we believe Respect should adopt a more regional structure to allow each area to develop in given the circumstances they face"

The main feature of this regional structure would be periodic meetings which would promote information exchanges amongst branches and discuss regional matters, general policy and electoral strategy.

The regions must be represented on National Council by eg. a minimum of x delegates per region, elected by each region. National Council meetings should be rotated around the country to give equal opportunity for delegates to attend.

The sources of policy resolutions to Annual Conference would remain as at present, ie. from National Council, the branches and any affiliated organisations. The practice of accepting resolutions from a group of individuals should, at least, be reviewed.

We call on National Council to implement this strategy: i) by setting up a regional structure as outlined; ii) by electing a new-style NC at next year's Annual Conference.

#### **34. Socialist Unity – Harlow**

This branch:

- 1) welcomes the National Committee statement agreed unanimously on 29/11/07
- 2) reiterates the need for socialist unity
- 3) looks forward to focussing our energies on fighting for progressive policies in the forthcoming general election

#### **35. On ‘the subordination of the socialist left’ in Respect - Jim Dymond; Mark Lewis; Ben Lewis; Tina Becker; Peter Pierce; John Bridge; Phil Railston; Jim Moody; Nick Rogers; Marion Haldane; Michael Malkin; Bob Davies; Mike MacNair; Steve Cooke; Cameron Richards; Stan Keable; Alan Stevens; Ethan Grech; Simon Dowdeswell; David Isaacson, Jamie Tedford, David Sabbagh, James Gilbert**

1. Conference notes:

- 1.1. That compromises are an essential part of the armoury of any serious political organisation.
- 1.2. That the refusal to make compromises is effectively the refusal to engage in politics and is useless to the cause of socialism.
- 1.3. That to understand whether they are principled or unprincipled, compromises must be assessed by the extent to which they serve the ultimate aim of socialism and liberation. They must not be judged by the criterion of ‘making a difference’ in terms of short-term electoral successes.

2. Conference believes:

2.1. That the socialist left of Respect has already subordinated too many principles of socialism to other political forces.

2.2. That the demand for the socialist left - the effective majority of Respect's activists - to vote against its own principles is an opportunist method and must be rejected.

2.3. That socialist principles are strong because they are universal and offer the prospect of general human liberation.

2.4. That these principles include:

\* No immigration controls. For open borders.

\* All political representatives and workers' movement representatives to receive no more than a skilled worker's wage.

\* For free abortion and contraception on demand.

\* For full equality for gays and lesbians.

\* Abolish the monarchy and the House of Lords. For a federal republic.

\* For working class socialism.

**36. Against violence and anathematisation in the movement - Jim Dymond; Mark Lewis; Ben Lewis; Tina Becker; Peter Pierce; John Bridge; Phil Railston; Jim Moody; Nick Rogers; Marion Haldane; Michael Malkin; Bob Davies; Mike MacNair; Steve Cooke; Cameron Richards; Stan Keable; Alan Stevens; Ethan Grech; Simon Dowdeswell; David Isaacson, Jamie Tedford, David Sabbagh, James Gilbert**

1. Conference notes:

1.1. That there have been allegations of violence at this year's Marxism, the annual school of the Socialist Workers Party.

1.2. That the alleged violent incident primarily involved two members of Respect.

1.3. That this is not the first time that such claims have been made involving people who now work as comrades in Respect.

2. Conference believes:

2.1. That violence in our movement is intolerable. Disputes and differences of opinion should be settled through civilised debate. In particular, members of Respect must show each other respect and there must be no culture of anathematisation.

3. Conference resolves:

3.1. To support calls for an independent commission of inquiry to establish the facts in the alleged incident on July 7.

3.2. To call on individuals and organisations in Respect to cooperate with any such inquiry and abide by its decisions and recommendations.

**37. Membership and Recruitment - Kambiz Boomla, Noreen Fatima, Joseph Choonara, Roddy Slorach, Jackie Turner, Isabel Silva, Adie Cousins, Rebecca Townesend, Paul Fredericks, Candy Udwin, Sian Barrett, Daniela Manske, Guy Taylor, Sam James, Chris Nineham, Nahella Ashraf, Kumar Murshid, Jennifer Braunlich, Des Freedman, Feyzi Ismail**

Conference notes:

- 1) That a growing and diverse membership is essential to the strength and potential for Respect to become the only alternative to the mainstream political parties.
- 2) That membership requires both a political and financial commitment and a broad understanding of the aims and values of Respect.
- 3) That the exponential growth of Respect branches such as Tower Hamlets is a positive development, but the way this growth is taking place particularly around the time of elections, raises doubts about how a number of members are being recruited.
- 4) That hundreds of members joining at once, paid for by one or two members and almost all of which are at the concessionary rate, is an unacceptable method of recruitment.
- 5) That Respect aims to maintain its flexibility over accepting concessionary memberships.

Conference resolves:

- 1) To intensify campaigning and recruitment efforts across all Respect branches through the membership drive already endorsed by the National Council.
- 2) That new members must attend a minimum of 2 meetings over a 6-month period before they can vote for internal positions, delegates to conference or candidates for elections.
- 3) That National Office reserve the right to request prospective members to provide proof of a concessionary rate in order to verify the membership fee paid.
- 4) To limit the number of memberships that can be submitted by one person to ten memberships per month.
- 5) To encourage members to submit memberships of their own accord, either online, by telephone, by post or in person, and provide as much information requested as possible on the membership form.
- 6) That the issue of membership recruitment and recruitment methods be discussed regularly by the National Council.

### **38. National Membership – Dorset**

This conference believes:

1. That an active and growing membership for Respect is vital if the organisation is to fulfil its potential to create a viable alternative to the mainstream political parties.

2. That the potential for Respect to grow is evident in its electoral successes and other initiatives.
3. That many of Respect's potential supporters may never have joined a political party before.
4. That the current £26 fee for waged members has created an unnecessary barrier to recruitment.
5. That Respect should make joining the organisation as easy as possible whilst maintaining the need for a financial contribution as a condition of membership.

This conference resolves:

1. To change the national membership subscription rates for all members with immediate effect to:
  - a. Standard Membership Rate of £10 per year
  - b. Supporting Membership Rate of £25 per year
  - c. Free Membership for asylum seekers
2. That Respect shall launch a national recruitment drive, with appropriate publicity and events, coordinated by the National Office and National Council, with the aim of significantly increasing national membership figures.
3. To encourage members to make further regular financial contributions to Respect above the minimum membership fee, such as by bankers standing order.

Conference further resolves to amend the Constitution as follows.

1. Delete existing Section 3.5) "*Membership of Respect involves a financial as well as a political commitment. The annual fee for membership of Respect will be determined by the annual conference. Membership will be by payment to the national office and will be administered at national level. The membership list will be kept by the national office and made available to local branches and Regions as necessary.*"
2. Replace with new section 3.5 as follows "*Membership of Respect involves a financial as well as a political commitment. The annual fee for membership of Respect will be determined by a scheduled discussion at the annual conference. Between conferences the annual fee may be varied by a vote of the National Council. Membership will be by payment to the national office and will be administered at national level. The membership list will be kept by the national office and made available to local branches and Regions as necessary.*"

**39. National Membership - Clive Searle, Elaine Graham-Leigh, Berny Parkes, Paddy O'Keeffe, George Galloway, Salma Yacoob, Mohammed Ishtiaq, Ger Francis, Richard Searle, Kay Phillips, Paul Kelly, Alice Searle, Rob Hoveman, Kevin Ovenden, Roy Wilkes, Matthew Langley, Emma Shaw, Lucinda Lavelle, Azeldin El-Sharif, Derek Fraser, Ben Langley, Adeeb Ahmed**

This conference believes:

1. That an active and growing membership for **Respect** is vital if the organisation is to fulfil its potential to create a viable alternative to the mainstream political parties.
2. That the potential for **Respect** to grow is evident in its electoral successes and other initiatives.
3. That many of **Respect**'s potential supporters may never have joined a political party before.
4. That the current £26 fee for waged members has created an unnecessary barrier to recruitment.
5. That **Respect** should make joining the organisation as easy as possible whilst maintaining the need for a financial contribution as a condition of membership.

This conference resolves:

1. To change the national membership subscription rate for all members to a flat rate £10 per year (with the exception of asylum seekers who shall be given free membership) with immediate effect.
2. That **Respect** shall launch a national recruitment drive, with appropriate publicity and events, coordinated by the National Office and National Council, with the aim of significantly increasing national membership figures.
3. To encourage members to make further regular financial contributions to **Respect** above the minimum membership fee, such as by bankers standing order. The National Office should offer a 'Solidarity membership rate' (set initially at £25) on all re-registration forms.

Conference further resolves to amend the Constitution as follows.

1. Delete existing Section 3.5) "*Membership of Respect involves a financial as well as a political commitment. The annual fee for membership of Respect will be determined by the annual conference. Membership will be by payment to the national office and will be administered at national level. The membership list will be kept by the national office and made available to local branches and Regions as necessary.*"
2. Replace with new section 3.5 as follows "*Membership of Respect involves a financial as well as a political commitment. The annual fee for membership of Respect will be determined by a scheduled discussion at the annual conference. Between conferences the annual fee may be varied by a vote of the National Council. Membership will be by payment to the national office and will be administered at national level. The membership list will be kept by the national office and made available to local branches and Regions as necessary.*"

#### **40. Respect Publication - Oxford**

Conference welcomes the decision in principal to launch a Respect publication in the New Year and mandates the National Committee to ensure that:

- 1) The publication is at least quarterly and targeted at both informing members in branches and members at large and recruiting new members.
- 2) The publication will work within the framework of policies agreed by the national conference and national council.

3) The publication be run by an editorial board appointed by the incoming national committee and reflecting the political currents actively building Respect.

#### **41. Women in Respect - Portsmouth**

This conference congratulates Respect on the very successful Women's Conference held in March and proposes that this should be a regular event.

We welcome the fact that Respect has a number of well known, female, leading members, with a much better gender balance than the mainstream political parties. These include Yvonne Ridley, Linda Smith, Maxine Bowler and particularly Salma Yacoub and Lindsey German. The latter two have a very real potential to win seats in the next Parliamentary or GLA elections.

The impact of victory by both or either of these women would be substantial, not just in Britain, but also abroad. They both have a high profile, due to their leading roles in the Stop the War organisation, as well as Respect. A victory for either would give us much more positive media attention, which hopefully they would be able to use to the benefit of furthering the policies of Respect.

We therefore propose that as many resources as possible be directed to their respective campaigns in Birmingham and London during the coming period.

#### **42. Equality and Diversity in Respect - Cambridge**

The Women and Political Representation Conference proposed by Cambridgeshire Respect at last year's National Conference was enthusiastically welcomed and well attended. A diverse group of women speakers and participants discussed the continuing fight for equality and the changing of society's attitudes towards women. It was hoped there would be similar forums in the future.

Cambridgeshire Respect now proposes:

- that local groups assess the representation of their membership and committees with a view to encouraging the greater participation of women, using techniques such as surveys and impact assessments;
- the organisation of local events and specific meetings to discuss issues affecting women which may encourage their participation in politics;
- the drawing up of measures to address the issues which are found to be a barrier to participation.

#### **43. Stop the War – South Manchester**

1. recognises the continuing centrality of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to politics in Britain with the commitment of the government to the alliance with the US in the

so called war on terror, despite the further fragmenting of the 'Coalition of the willing' and the growing horror of the situation on the ground in both Iraq and Afghanistan

2. notes that opposition to the occupation of Iraq is still growing as shown by recent opinion polls and the success of protests such as the demonstration in Manchester outside the special Labour Party conference in June and the recent march on parliament

3. resolves to continue prioritising our work in the Stop the War Coalition, aiming to give the fullest possible expression to the opposition to the occupations and the danger of widening conflict as shown by the repeated threats from Bush to attack Iran

#### **44. Iran – Dorset**

This conference utterly condemns the warmongering of the French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner when commenting, "We have to prepare for the worst, and the worst is war,"

This conference also recognises the pivotal role played by the French people in the anti-war movement and send our support to the French anti-war movement in their fight against the new pro-war stance being adopted by their government.

This conference reaffirms our opposition to any move by the United States, Britain and any other Government who threaten war on nations such as Iran who oppose their global aims.

We pledge to continue to work with the Stop the War Coalition and all other anti-war movements in this country and globally to avoid the repeat of the catastrophes and crimes against humanity that have taken place and continue to occur in Iraq and Afghanistan.

#### **45. Iran – West Central**

1) This conference notes the continuing threat of a US attack on Iran and that the target of such an attack has shifted from a nuclear power plant to the Revolutionary Guards.

2) This conference opposes any such military adventure and any British involvement or support for it.

3) We recall the bitter legacy left by the US-UK coup which overthrew the democratically elected Mossadeq government in 1953 and years of Western support for the Shah's dictatorship.

4) We oppose any attack on Iran by the United States and Israel because we understand that this would mark a further extension of the global 'war on terror' being promoted by Washington and has nothing to do with concern for human rights in the region.

5) Recalling the devastation and loss of life unleashed by United Nations sanctions on Iraqi civilians during the 1990s we oppose the imposition of sanctions on Iran by the UN and the European Union.

6) We endorse the call by the Stop the War Coalition for immediate protests nationwide in event of any attack on Iran and urge all Respect branches, student groups and elected representatives to join, build and publicise these.

#### **46. British Residents Detained in Guantanamo Bay – Brighton and Hove**

Conference notes

1. The remarkable lack of progress on the release of those British residents still illegally imprisoned in Guantanamo Bay, since the British Foreign Secretary wrote to the US Secretary of State in early August requesting their release.
  2. That their American torturers are now seeking to dictate the conditions under which they would be allowed to live in this country.
  3. The light that this bizarre negotiation sheds on the so-called "special relationship" which the UK enjoys with the US.
- Conference therefore resolves to call on the UK Government to demand the immediate and unconditional release of all UK residents still held in Guantanamo Bay, or other undisclosed prisons, and their safe return to the UK.

#### **47. Mumia Abu Jamal - Oxford**

Respect National Conference backs the campaign to free Mumia Abu Jamal from unlawful imprisonment in the USA. This conference agrees to affiliate to the campaign and send a message of support to Mumia.

#### **48. Climate Change – Enfield and Haringey**

Conference recognises:

1. That recent scientific studies suggest that global warming is happening at an increasing rate and that a reduction of global CO<sup>2</sup> emissions by 60% by 2030 will be necessary in order to avert the worst effects. This would require a reduction in UK emissions of 90% by 2030.
2. That climate change will be most devastating for the poor, both in the developing and the developed world.
3. That the government and the other neo-liberal parties view the market as the only possible vehicle for solutions to climate change. However, the establishment of a market in carbon emissions enables countries or individuals to continue to pollute if they can pay to do so. Carbon offsetting and carbon

trading schemes have been shown to be potentially profitable for private companies, but have not and are not likely to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

4. That market-driven solutions to climate change focus on individual lifestyle changes, whether voluntary or mandated through a carbon rationing scheme. These ignore the need to address the underlying system determining individual lifestyle choices and may simply create a pseudo-green consumer culture, where the issue of climate change is reduced to a profitable brand.
5. That the market stands in the way of effective solutions to climate change, such as the large-scale adoption of renewable electricity generation or the development of a fully-integrated, affordable public transport system as a real alternative to car transport and road freight.
6. That biofuels, far from being a green solution to the problem of emissions from transport, are a significant threat to ordinary people worldwide, as land previously used for food crops is given over to the production of biofuels, causing shortages and price increases.

Conference resolves:

1. To continue to campaign for action on climate change on the basis of need, not profit.
2. To place climate change at the centre of our opposition to the market-driven privatisation agenda and in particular to campaign for the renationalisation of public transport and of power generation and supply and against the expansion of air travel and nuclear energy.
3. To reject an equation of environmental campaigning and consumerism and instead to continue to work to build a mass movement for collective action on climate change.
4. To support the Campaign against Climate Change and in particular the CCC Trade Union Conference on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2008 and the National Climate March on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

#### **49. Climate Change – Brent and Harrow**

Conference calls on all branches to affiliate to the Campaign Against Climate Change and to work with other groups around local and national environmental issues. Conference also recognises however that there may be real and significant differences between ourselves and other parties on environmental policies and urges that while unity should be maintained wherever possible this should not be at the expense of open and honest debate about the solutions to climate chaos.

#### **50. Climate Change – Brighton and Hove**

Conference acknowledges the overwhelming scientific consensus that global average temperature rises must be kept below 2°C if we are to avoid an irreversible and catastrophic destabilisation of the Earth's climate system. Conference further notes the growing scientific evidence that carbon dioxide concentrations need to be kept below 450ppmv if an average temperature rise of 2°C is to be avoided. The Government's current target of reducing UK carbon emissions by 60% by 2050 is therefore wholly inadequate. Conference believes that the Government's target must be revised in the light of the latest scientific evidence, that emission figures must include aviation and shipping, and that there should be annual as well as five yearly targets in order to ensure that the long term targets are met.

Setting targets however, is only one half of the equation; in order to meet those targets there needs to be urgent practical action aimed at severely reducing the rate at which fossil fuels are burnt. Conference therefore demands urgent government action to secure the following measures:

- A massive expansion of affordable fully integrated and publicly owned public transportation in order to end the domination of the automobile.
- The immediate scrapping of all airport and road expansion plans.
- A massive program of public works to bring all public and domestic buildings up to the highest standards of insulation.
- The building in sufficient numbers of high quality and conveniently located social housing.
- A massive expansion of renewable energy facilities to enable the progressive phasing out of fossil fuel based power generation.
- A binding international treaty to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions in a fair and equitable manner and to an extent which will prevent carbon dioxide concentrations exceeding 450ppmv.

Conference recognizes that a campaign of mass action will be needed to force through these changes, and that the organized labour movement will need to be a central component of any such campaign.

Conference therefore resolves to fully support and promote the following events:

1. The Campaign against Climate Change National Climate March on Saturday 8th December 2007.
2. The Campaign against Climate Change Trade Union Conference on Saturday 9th February 2008.

## **51. Climate Change - Southwark**

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catastrophic destabilisation of the Earth's climate system. Conference further notes the growing scientific evidence that carbon dioxide concentrations need to be kept below 450ppmv if an average temperature rise of 2°C is to be avoided. The Government's current target of reducing UK carbon emissions by 60% by 2050 is therefore wholly inadequate. Conference believes that the Government's target must be revised in the light of the latest scientific evidence, that emission figures must include aviation and shipping, and that there should be annual as well as five yearly targets in order to ensure that the long term targets are met.

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- A massive expansion of affordable, fully integrated and publicly owned public transportation in order to end the domination of the automobile.
- The immediate scrapping of all airport and road expansion plans.
- A massive program of public works to bring all public and domestic buildings up to the highest standards of insulation.
- The building in sufficient numbers of high quality and conveniently located council housing.
- A massive expansion of renewable energy facilities to enable the progressive phasing out of fossil fuel based power generation. No to nuclear power
- A binding international treaty to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions in a fair and equitable manner and to an extent which will prevent carbon dioxide concentrations exceeding 450ppmv.

Conference recognizes that a campaign of mass action will be needed to force through these changes, and that the organized labour movement will need to be a central component of any such campaign. Conference therefore resolves to fully support and promote the following events:

1. The Campaign against Climate Change National Climate March on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2007.
2. The Campaign against Climate Change Trade Union Conference on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

## **52. Climate Change and Local councils – North Manchester and Bury**

Conference accepts that the scientific evidence proving that human activity is contributing to the warming of the planet is overwhelming. In the developed world it will be the poorest who will be most severely affected by this. In the global south it will be those with the fewest resources who will face a future without adequate food and clean water, and who will be obliged to migrate in order to survive.

This is an issue that will increasingly become of the highest importance for working people and trade unionists in Britain.

Councils have an important role to play in both setting a good example and in reducing their own carbon footprints.

Conference therefore demands that all councils pledge to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide by 25% by 2012 as a minimal first step, and that they should do so without cutting jobs or services. Measures that could and should be introduced by councils as a matter of urgency include the following:

- Bringing all buildings owned or used by local authorities (including council houses) up to the highest standards of insulation.
- The introduction and enforcement of building regulations that encompass the highest environmental standards.
- The introduction and progressive expansion of local renewable micro-generation, for example by installing wind turbines, photo-voltaic solar panels and geo-thermal generators.
- The installation of motion sensors in all council offices to ensure that lighting and electronic office equipment is turned off automatically when not in use.

Conference urges all councils to involve both the public and the trade unions in a campaign to secure funding from central government sufficient to introduce these measures.

Conference further resolves to:

- 1) Support, publicise and encourage members to attend the Campaign Against Climate Change demonstration on Saturday December 8th.
- 2) Support, publicise and encourage members to attend the Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Conference on Saturday 8th February 2008.
- 3) Sponsor the conference in the name of Respect.

**53. Constitutional Amendment - John Rees, Elaine Graham-Leigh, Paul Sillett, Chris Nineham, Lindsey German, Shaun Doherty, Maxine Bowler, Pat Stack, Michael Lavalette, Jackie Turner, Clare Solomon, Rob Owen, Chris Bambery, Carly Neill, Carmel Brown, Daniel Swain, Anna Owen, Helen Salmon, Mehdi Hassan, Dominic Alexander, Hope Nolan, Elaine Heffernan, Chris Harman**

Delete section 4.3 of the Respect constitution and replace it with the following:

The National Council of Respect will be comprised of up to 50 members including the Chair, National Secretary and National Organiser. With the exception of the National Secretary, National Organiser and Chair will be elected on the eSTV system

**Respect: the unity coalition: <http://www.respectcoalition.org/index.php?ite=1511>**

as recommended by the Electoral Reform Society and using the methodology and programme provided by them. The National Secretary, National Organiser and Chair will be elected by majority vote by the annual conference. Any two members of Respect can nominate a candidate for the NC. The closing dates for nominations for the whole NC, including the named officers, will be decided by the Conference Arrangements Committee.