

# Cheshire FBU News

## *Conference Special...May 2007...Conference Special*

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### 1. Conference

The 82 Annual Conference took place in Southport on the 9<sup>th</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

There were less International resolutions than for many years something in Cheshire we should address for next the conference; however conference was addressed by International speakers from New Zealand and Venezuela. The New Zealand comrade talked about the need for international links between the FBU and their Union, as what happens here this year seems to be transported to Australasia the next year. They if you recall were helpful in alerting us to the FBU busting agenda of Tony McGuirk

The Venezuela comrade spoke of all the improvements to health, education, jobs and the economy in his country since Hugo Chavez was elected president. He told conference that the USA are trying to undermine these advances for working people and that is why there is an international campaign to defend the gains already achieved for working people called "Hands off Venezuela". For more information check out web site [www.handsoffvenezuela.org](http://www.handsoffvenezuela.org)

Other speakers included the Minister for Fire Angela Smith MP who received a luke warm reception from delegates.

All details of the debates at conference can be found on the FBU website [www.fbu.org.uk](http://www.fbu.org.uk)

## 2. Fringe Meetings

There were several fringe meetings;

### **The situation facing trade unionist in Columbia.**

Here delegates heard about the death squads that operate in Columbia against trade union activists and how we can help raise awareness of the issue in the UK. Check out web site

<http://www.justiceforcolombia.org/dev/home/index.php>

For more information

### **FBU partnership with Sefton Project.**

The FBU North West sponsors two members (Cheshire Members have been previously) and two young people every year to go to Poland to see Nazi concentration camps and learn about the genocide by the Nazis against the Jews, Socialist and Trade Unionists during the war. The young people then come back to the UK to help educate and spread the message that prejudice and racism if not challenged can have disastrous consequences. The aim of the project is to encourage more tolerant behavior and highlight the problems being faced by communities where the BNP are attempting to gain a foothold.

The talk given by one young person was quite moving and obviously turned their life around from one of crime and drugs into being a positive role model for young people who educates others about the 'holocaust' and what damage prejudice and intolerance can cause.

## 3. Trade stalls

Groups that had stalls within the conference centre were:

Cuban Solidarity Campaign

Palestine Solidarity Campaign

Union Learn in association with FBU Lifelong Learning

Working Class Movement Library

Socialist Book Stall

It is quite easy to ignore the plight of workers around the globe but a flick through the leaflets on various stalls demonstrates the similarities that oppressed workers and Union members worldwide are going through.

## 4. Labour Party Re-Affiliation

Conference defeated heavily a motion to re-affiliate to the Labour Party  
Delegates remembered all too vividly the shocking treatment we received by the Labour Party during the pay dispute with comments from Labour MPs calling FBU members Fascists.

## 5. Closed Session Debates

The two big issues at conference were the questions of the constitutional position of the sections and co-responding.

These debates were to be held in closed session; however the resolutions on the sections were all withdrawn to be debated in another arena. The subject will be seen by some to be quite divisive but the discussion should centre on what is best for a truly democratic Union.

The debate on co-responding was all about the way forward, the EC statement was defeated in favour of the Merseyside emergency resolution which was passed overwhelmingly. This restated the current policy of not participating in co-responding. Members are encouraged to read the correspondence sent to branches to get an understanding of what the resolutions were about.

## 6. Other Issues

**A.** Conference voted to maintain the Associate, Professional and Technical linkage to pay for this year and coming years. The ball is now in the Employers court if they want stability in the UK Fire Service.

**B.** Both the Cheshire resolutions moved by Dave Williams on TRV's and Secondary contracts were passed by conference.

**C.** A resolution on Ill Health retirements was passed raising the issue of Authorities preventing our members from retiring on ill health grounds so as not to pay ill health pensions.

**To contribute to further issues of Cheshire FBU News contact your  
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