

SERTUC annual report 2011



About the region

SERTUC, the Southern & Eastern Region of the TUC, is the largest of the TUC's six English regions and covers three of the former government regions: London, the South East, and East of England. Over two million trades unionists live and work within the region.

The Regional Council is appointed annually by affiliates and county associations of trades councils and meets four times a year to discuss both how to achieve policy determined at the national Trades Union Congress and to make specific policies on regional issues. At its Annual General Meeting it elects officers and an Executive Committee that meets monthly.

Affiliated trade unions and county associations also nominate to SERTUC's industrial and equality subgroups who use their industrial and life experience to inform the activities of the Regional Council.

The SERTUC office administers the Regional Council, delivers services to affiliates, represents the TUC in relations with public bodies, and campaigns for Congress policies.

There are four members of staff: Megan Dobney *Regional Secretary*, Darren Lewis *Administrative Secretary*, Laurie Heselden *Campaigns and Policy Officer*, and Ellenor Hutson *Project Worker*.



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President's foreword



David Cameron is on record as saying “A government led by me will not address the deficit in a way that makes the poor poorer; that causes cuts in public services or divides Britain”.

Fact: there will be more than £18 billion of cuts to the welfare benefits that our most impoverished people depend upon.

Fact: there will be at least half a million job losses in the public sector by 2015, including thousands of front-line clinical staff, fighter pilots, tens of thousands of police officers and hundreds of thousands of local authority workers, and those workers provide public services that we all depend upon.

Fact: more than 50,000 students and

supporters marched against the staggering increase in tuition fees, tens of thousands more marched against the effective abolition of the Education Maintenance Allowance, 20 per cent of all workers aged under 25 are unemployed and half of all Black men under 25 are unemployed.

Fact: Cameron has made the poor poorer; Cameron has cut essential public services and Cameron has divided Britain.

Fact: David Cameron lied to every person in Britain.

The Conservative Party did not win a majority in the General Election 6 May 2010 and it has no legitimate mandate, but the rancid coalition it has assembled intends to impose brutal cuts. The government's excuse for breaking promises is that “when they took office they found the books were worse than they thought they would be”, but the projected budget deficit for 2010-2011 was £186 billion, when the actual deficit will be nearer £140 billion. The books were in fact far better than they had thought and anyone who tells you that government's finances were worse than anticipated is a liar.

I wrote a year ago that some “people always have been the foolish victims of deception and self-deception in politics, and they always will be until they have learnt to seek out the interests of some class or other behind all moral, religious, political and social phrases,

declarations and promises”, a quotation from Lenin’s *The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism*, (1913). Today, no-one in Britain can be under any delusion that the Conservative’s programme is purely and exclusively one of deficit reduction. The Conservative’s programme is deeply ideological; the NHS to be privatised, free and academy schools to sever the accountability of publicly provided education, a presumption of private sector first for every public service still provided.

The Conservative’s programme baldly transfers wealth from the poor and working families to the wealthy. VAT rises and real terms pay cuts year after year for the huge majority in Britain whilst Barclays Bank pays just one per cent tax on its profits and the banks pay an obscene £7 billion in bonuses to the ranks of bankers who are already minted. The tone of the political invective might be less shrill than Thatcher’s but the menace posed by the deepest cuts since the 1920s, the wholesale privatisation of public services and the destruction of the welfare state is much greater than we faced in the 1980s.

These cuts are not inevitable, they are not necessary, they are not fair and they are very very stupid, threatening a long-term low growth, high unemployment future in which poverty levels worsen and society is

ruptured by hate politics. So what is to be done? We have to trumpet our alternative whereby the deficit is reduced in a balanced way over the medium term, in which taxes are fair and progressive and where massive steps are taken to collect much of the £120 billion of the taxes that are evaded and avoided every year; the introduction of a Robin Hood Tax on speculative financial transactions and a massive programme of investment in public housing, transport infrastructure, green technologies, flood prevention and industry. A better way is possible.

So the challenge for every trade unionist is to be a dynamic mentor to their workmates, family, friends and neighbours, urging them to stop, reject the rhetoric they hear in the media, to read, to think, to analyse and so better understand the world in which they live. And then to join a union, organise, agitate, struggle, fight for the values of socialism, and win. Trade unionism remains the hope of the world, it is precisely now, when all we have fought for over generations is under the greatest threat, that we have the opportunity to raise the consciousness of working people and win their commitment to a socialist Britain with trade unions at the front and centre of all that is progressive.

Martin Gould
Regional President

Secretary's introduction

This report attempts to give a flavour of the work over the past year covering work in the three sub regions, campaigning activities, and the work carried out through our equality and industrial sub-groups and trades councils.

So I begin by paying tribute to the officers and activists who have made it possible. Some are named but many are not. But without them this would be a slim volume indeed! Sincere thanks to all for the commitment, contribution and creativity you have shown, and thanks to your unions who have supported your, and our, activity.

One I must mention is John Ball, for many years SERTUC's policy officer for the south east. Funding from the South East England Development Agency ended and John left us in August 2010. Obviously the loss of a worker is a blow to any collective, but we also miss John's great humour, thoughtfulness and kindness. He continues to play a voluntary role for us on various bodies and projects in the south east for which we are truly grateful!

Sadly, I must also pay tribute to a couple of comrades who have died during the year:

Along with our colleagues in Congress House we note with great sadness the untimely death of **Keith Faulkner**. Keith worked for the TUC for many years

organising marches, conferences and events and is greatly missed.

Jayaben Desai died at the end of last year also. Jayaben was well known as one of the inspirational leaders of the historic Grunwick dispute, and while we mourn her death we celebrate her tremendous contribution to our movement.

Finally, the coming year isn't going to be an easy one. However, SERTUC will continue, with your help, to support unions, reps and members.

We will continue to oppose anti-union laws, cuts in public services and job losses, racism and fascism, and all actions that seek to undermine the working and living conditions of SERTUC's two million trade unionists and their families.

Megan Dobney
Regional Secretary

Regional economic development

Following the general election in May 2010 it was clearly established that the regional development agencies would be abolished by March 2012. All three are focussing on closing down and virtually no economic development work continues.

South East England Development Agency

Richard Ascough was appointed to the Board of SEEDA in December 2009 and commenced his duties in January 2010.

He was asked by the Board to be one of the Board members with specific interest in Berkshire and Surrey and was also placed on the Remuneration Committee and, at the time, the Audit Committee. He was also asked to deal with the Equalities Committee.

Within the first few months it became clear that SEEDA was not going to continue to fund the Social Dialogue Forum and he spent some time facilitating meetings to see if this position could be reversed.

Unfortunately, once the general election result was known it was clear that this would not happen.

Richard transferred from the Audit Committee to the Transition Committee which was looking at the run-down of SEEDA prior to its closure. The Transition Committee has now been absorbed into the main Board and the main Board has reduced

its activities, reverting from monthly meetings to every other month.

The overall position is therefore one that is fairly depressing where all activity is concentrated on the closure programme.

East of England Development Agency

The change of government policy at the general election has meant EEDA's work is also focused on transition and closure. There are real concerns about the failure of the government to offer an alternative Growth Strategy but the RDAs are finding it difficult to be heard.

Following the decision to abolish RDAs Karen Livingstone was asked to stay on the EEDA board as the trade union link through the closure period – this is likely to be until June/July 2012.

She chairs the Audit Committee and has chaired the Equalities Advisory Group and Women's Enterprise Steering Group. Both of these activities have been wound up due to the ending of RDA funding (most is cut from March 2011) and the closure from March 2012.

Chairing the Audit Committee continues and they are trying to ensure an orderly transfer of responsibilities to Local Enterprise Partnerships or other appropriate agencies. Most of the work, however, is discontinuing.

Through this closure period Karen has sought to reinforce support to the RDA staff as well as appropriate governance structures for the closure activity.

There are a series of closure work streams directed by a Transition Committee. A key area of work here is to seek to ensure knowledge capture and transfer. EEDA is keen to ensure that the tremendous work undertaken by all RDAs and EEDA in particular should be captured for future use.

London Development Agency

The regional secretary sits on the Board of the LDA. As with SEEDA and EEDA, responsibilities have changed, and she has moved from a role on the Investment Committee to the Audit, Risk and Performance Committee.

The position in London is unique amongst the RDAs in that some of the economic development functions of the LDA will transfer to the GLA before the final closure of the LDA. In addition the London part of the Homes and Communities Agency will transfer to the GLA.

At the time of writing the LDA is still awaiting its financial settlement from government, so it is unclear what programmes and projects can be continued under the GLA's remit.

There have been major staff reductions in consultation with the unions in the LDA.

Local Enterprise Partnerships

The government has established, with a great deal of confusion, LEPs across the country. These are business/local authority bodies, with no significant funding, but with access to the Regional Growth Fund. The RGF is a new £1.4bn three year fund that will operate across England to "stimulate private sector led sustainable economic growth and employment".

The scale of funding is insignificant compared to the RDA funding and strategic economic development will be greatly diminished.

SERTUC LEPs have been agreed as follows:

- **Coast to Coast (West Sussex, Brighton & Hove, Gatwick Diamond, Croydon)**
- **South East Midlands (Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes etc)**
- **Oxfordshire City Region**
- **Kent & Greater Essex & East Sussex**
- **Solent**
- **Thames Valley Berkshire**
- **Hertfordshire**
- **Greater Cambridge & Greater Peterborough**
- **New Anglia (Norfolk & Suffolk)**
- **London**

Campaigns report

Campaigning on behalf of unions, their members and all working people and their families is the essence of what SERTUC does. This year we have been confronted by a coalition government that is hostile to so many of the principles and institutions that we regard as being fundamental to the quality of life for all, and the foundation of progress towards equality and justice for all. So the campaigning lines have been crystal clear, the messages stark and the enemy sharply defined. Our objectives have been to stimulate and organise huge public opposition to the government's cuts and privatisation programme, and to win support for an alternative programme that will make Britain a more prosperous and fairer place to live, a society with modern trade unions at its heart.

The general election was held 6 May 2010, the result was hung and over the following days a coalition government emerged, but in practice its economic and budgetary policy,

and policy towards public services, is that of the Conservatives. The cuts announced in the mini budget in June showed the government's colours, because 72 per cent of those cuts were suffered by women and children.

SERTUC helped mobilise for a national rally and lobby of Parliament before the Comprehensive Spending Review, 20 October, which outlined £84 billion of cuts. SERTUC called for the organisation of local protests around the following weekend and supported major demonstrations in Croydon, Cambridge and Hastings, led by trades councils. An explicit aim was to build coalitions between trade unions, communities and service users that could be the nuclei of anti-cuts campaigns. SERTUC also organised a rally in London, 23 October, *Organising to defend public services*, the aim of which was to stimulate the trade union movement's collective response.



Don't let Hastings go to Hell!



January's Day of Action

SERTUC called for a local day of action 15 January to highlight the lies the government is telling and we designed a mobilising leaflet. Unite paid for 20,000 copies to be printed, which were circulated via unions, trades councils and anti-cuts campaigns. SERTUC wrote and issued guidance on *How to Start a Local Campaign* and *How to Work Effectively with Local Media*. And we promoted the False Economy website www.falseeconomy.org.uk as a campaign tool. SERTUC issued forward notices and press releases to the media with all the contacts for local events and local stories and brokered links between media and spokespersons for local campaigns. On the day very nearly 50 local events were held, much of which was street leafleting, the largest of which was a march and rally in Portsmouth, and the most innovative were a 'read in' in Ipswich, the creation of a cardboard city in Brixton and an anti-cuts conga in Reading. National media coverage was achieved on BBC Radio 4 and Sky News, and substantial coverage in local media was won. But the ultimate aim was to build and deepen local campaigns, urging trade unions to reach out to the voluntary sector, charities, other social campaign groups and user groups.



Some of the many 15 January anti-cuts activities in *top row* Stevenage, Lewisham, Portsmouth and Kings Lynn, *above* Southampton, and *below* Merton & Sutton, Redbridge, and Ipswich





SERTUC sought to actively support demonstrations organised by trade unions and sister organisations. So SERTUC was present with a banner at events such as the UCU NUS march and rally 10 November, which was attended by more than 50,000 demonstrators and the CWU's national demonstration in Witney, Oxfordshire, 9 January, which took the protest colourfully to Cameron's own back yard.

In response to the scale of the threat and SERTUC's call for local protest there were rallies and marches in the coming weeks across the SERTUC region, notably in Brighton, Southampton, Ipswich and Norwich that were attended by thousands of people, but similarly anti-cuts campaigns were formed in almost every town and community, from Andover to Woking, and meetings and demonstrations held.

SERTUC called for a second day of local action, 8 March, this time focusing on the disproportionate impact of the cuts on women. Again we wrote and designed a leaflet and this time Unison funded the printing of 30,000 leaflets. The leaflets were drawn down by local campaign activists in small batches so we could be as certain as possible that they were being used properly. Once supplies were exhausted, SERTUC's Campaign Fund paid for the printing of

further print runs of 20,000 of each leaflet.

Both leaflets promoted the national march and rally, 26 March. SERTUC worked closely with sub-regional anti-cuts campaigns in London, the South East and the East of England and we collated and published information about coach transport sponsored by unions and trades councils and circulated appeals for senior, march and travel stewards.

SERTUC enthusiastically spoke at innumerable union meetings, regional, branch and equality groups and trades councils on the themes of opposing the cuts and promoting a progressive alternative. SERTUC sought to mobilise sister organisations, such as speaking at a London CND meeting. Along with unions, SERTUC has sought to mobilise unions that are not yet affiliated to the TUC, speaking at meetings of London Health Unions for example.

Since this report was written before the 26 March we cannot describe the national demonstration but we are confident that it will be a massive and a huge rejection by the public of the government's cuts programme, with trade unions at the heart of the broad coalition of opposition, leading the alternative strategy. One of the reasons we are confident that the turn-out for the



left Chuka Umunna MP speaking at the *Organising to defend public services* rally in October 2010, placards at Witney, and the lobby of the London fire authority in support of sacked firefighter Sian Griffiths in November

national demonstration will have been massive is the breadth of contact we have had with communities rejecting the government's plans. When we get anti-cuts campaigns started in places such as Maldon in Essex, and public meetings organised in Windsor; we know that antipathy to the government's programme is widespread, deep and hopefully ubiquitous.

We know that the national demonstration is only the beginning of our struggle, and we already have further campaign activities in development, including a protest against the cuts by disabled trade unionists and another local day of action, on International Children's Day on 1 June, highlighting the impact of the cuts on children and the increase in child poverty.

And we believe that the public has only just begun to realise that the government's plans for the NHS entail a massive increase in privatisation and that the government's pledge to ringfence health was a sham. Budget cuts in London will approach 20 per cent and tens of thousands of health professionals, including a high proportion of clinical staff will lose their jobs, and hospitals might close. SERTUC is seeking to maintain close links with health unions and to integrate the government's health proposals into the anti-cuts narrative, and to support

health union's campaigns. During the year we fought to win representation for unions at the first London Health Summit, where we made forceful representations of our case.

SERTUC was pleased to support unions in struggle during the year, including workers in dispute with Medirest, London Underground, British Airways, and London local authorities and bus companies.

Obviously every dispute has a workplace issue at its core, but often there is a wider significance too. It became even more commonplace in the last year for ballots to be undermined by the courts for petty reasons making industrial action within large groups of workers extraordinarily difficult to organise. Opposition by the FBU to the Section 188 redundancy notices issued to 8,000 fire fighters in London unless they accepted an imposed change in working hours, on top of a pay freeze, was a cause that SERTUC was eager to support. Equally, we were keen to support Sian Griffiths, FBU activist, when she was suspended by management during the dispute. SERTUC attended the rally for speech and language therapists in Southwark who went on strike in February opposing the redundancy of nine colleagues, in what could become a signature dispute in the struggle against the cuts.

Burston Strike School rally

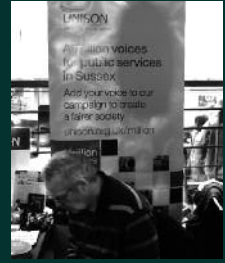


We celebrated the Burston Strike School in September 2010, where magnificent weather and an appealing programme drew what was perhaps a record attendance

top left to right Chris Keates NASUWT, Tony Benn, Len McCluskey Unite, Christine Blower NUT, Diane Abbott and Ed Balls, and participants from co-operative youth movement the Woodcraft Folk



Robert Noonan celebration



In February 2011 we commemorated the centenary of the death of Robert Noonan, who under the name of Robert Tressell, wrote *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, with a mixture of music, comedy, poetry and politics in Hastings. The event, held in Hastings (Tressell's Mugsborough) and organised by Tony Streeter, was attended by more than 300 people





Other activities we undertook in the year to secure better employment and trade union rights, and better awareness of those that exist, were the organisation of joint events in London and the East of England with ACAS for trade union officers and senior reps, and representations at the London Strategic Migration Partnership, seeking partners' support in helping migrant workers to secure their full employment rights.

Our front line is the thousands of workplace reps who do such dedicated work in the workplace and priorities for us are to recognise their immense contribution to trade unionism in the region, to provide them with new opportunities to network with each other and to provide them with new skills. Our Reps Conference was attended by more than 100 workplace reps, many of whom had never been inside

Congress House before, and we were delighted that so many young, black and women trade unionists attended.

During the year we organised courses on 'using a web site as an organising and campaign tool' and 'media skills', to complement the organising and other courses provided by unionlearn. As we write we are mobilising for our trades councils conference, which will be held in June.

Winning equality is a central feature of SERTUC's programme of work. We were delighted to organise a public meeting with the authors of the highly influential book *The Spirit Level*, Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett. We sought to press the issue of the London Living Wage and 'in work poverty' with regional partners and the Mayor of London. Other issues we raised with the

110 people filled the General Council chamber at Congress House to listen to, and discuss with, *The Spirit Level* authors Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson

Mayor at the regular meetings we have with him were the impact of cuts in London, job losses, transport issues and the legacy of the 2012 Olympic Games.

Against the tide of what seems to be increasing hostility to radical feminism SERTUC continued to support the Charter for Women, the National Assembly of Women, White Ribbon Day against domestic violence and the Abortion Rights Campaign, and we were pleased to be able to contribute to events around the TUC Women's Conference in March, because it was held in our region.

During the early part of the Regional Council year our Anti Racist Anti Fascist Action Plan was focused on defeating the far-right at the general and local elections. Key areas of work included supporting Searchlight, Unite Against Fascism and Love Music Hate Racism by supporting their events and mobilising for their days of action. We also supported the work of Operation BlackVote to boost voter registration and supported unions in efforts to mobilise their resources, especially their local reps in key areas. In this work we were pleased to showcase the *Make Your Vote Count* campaign that PCS implemented with great dynamism.

Happily, the BNP polled poorly in the general election and their leader was humiliated in his attempt to win the seat in

Barking. Simultaneously, the BNP leadership imploded. The BNP did equally poorly in the local elections, losing all 12 of its seats in Barking and Dagenham. This was a considerable success for the anti-fascist campaigners.

The emerging problem this year has been the persistence of the English Defence League. The SERTUC Executive Committee has remained alert to reports about the EDL and has been keen to support counter-demonstrations against it, such as in Luton on 5 February. The threat posed by the EDL necessitates even closer working with communities and the strengthening of trades councils that we have witnessed this year is a vital buttress against hate politics and for community cohesion and progressive politics. Cameron's claim that multiculturalism is harmful and has failed is a reminder that there can be no complacency on this issue, and that this generation of Tories has much the same instincts as previous ones.

Happily, being a trade unionist is not all struggle and there are moments of celebration and expression of our vision of how a better world is possible. We celebrated International Worker's Day in solidarity with the hundreds of millions of our trade union friends across the planet in all corners of the world.

We actively supported a conference with the *Morning Star* in June 2010, analysing the balance of forces and discussing the way ahead for socialism. SERTUC remains a committed supporter of the *Morning Star* and we are eager to do even more to support the paper:

In the field of education we continued a working liaison with the Anti Academies Alliance, proposed campaign workshops in those areas where a local authority is seeking to urge or compel applications for academy status by schools (the first will be held in Sutton), and have agreed to have a joint conference in June with AAA, with a focus on the role of trade unionists who are school governors.

We celebrated International Women's Day with the national TUC. Whilst writing, we are in discussions with the producers of *Woody Sez*, which is a musical in London about the life and times of Woody Guthrie, to see if we can arrange a trade union evening and have organised two SERTUC Theatre Club events; one in June performed by children about the Tolpuddle Martyrs, and the other, in July, a two-handed performance based on *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. The life of a trade unionist should never be dull as there are so many sources for inspiration and opportunities for celebration.

The largest event we were involved in at

Congress House was the sponsorship of the Progressive London conference in February, which drew more than 100 speakers and more than 800 attendees. As well as articulating a progressive agenda for London, in advance of the 2012 London Assembly and Mayoral elections, the event was an explicit rallying call for the national demonstration in March and a ringing endorsement of the critical value of trade unionism, both to individual members and to society as a whole.

On the fundamental point of the management of the economy, SERTUC built a closer dialogue with the Bank of England and its regional Agents for London, the South East and the East of England during the year, holding face to face meetings with two of the Monetary Policy Committee's members, David Miles and Spencer Dale. At these meetings we expressed our evidence-based view for a continuation of low interest rates and support for a growth strategy rather than a narrow and self-destructive focus on deficit reduction.

We have continued to add our weight to the work being conducted by USDAW and south east MEPs around the job losses at Twinings in Andover.

This profitable British-based multinational has been granted a sum of 12 million euros from the European Regional Development Fund.



2010 UpRise
attendee after face
painting in the
UnionCity tent

In general terms such money should not be granted when the outcome is a shift of employment from one member country to another. However a nonsensical loophole, allowing Twinings in Poland to be classified as an SME, has made this possible.

The latest verdict from European Commissioner Hahn suggests that as the Polish authorities haven't complained about the migration of jobs from Andover to Twinings' Polish subsidiary, there is nothing that the Commission can do!

We have concern that Twinings has driven a coach and horses through the intent, if not the letter of European law and will continue to campaign for this to be reversed.

An explicit anti-racist message was fundamental to what was once the Respect festival, and then became the Rise festival. The present Mayor of London cancelled the festival in 2009 and dropped the anti-racist message in 2008. SERTUC continues to lobby for the return of a major anti-racist festival to be held in this region and was pleased to support a community coalition called UpRise that organised a festival in October 2010 with an explicit anti-racist message and a UnionCity zone at the event. Plans are in hand now for a summer festival

(it rained in October 2010...) on 10 July and we have received national TUC support for this work as well as making a donation to the organisation of the festival from our Campaign Fund.

SERTUC has produced our latest *Directory* of unions and organisations in the Region and were very grateful for support from Thompsons solicitors for this project. The directory is available in hard copy as well as on-line at www.tuc.org.uk/sertuc.

As staff resources are slender at SERTUC and every penny of the Campaign Fund is precious we do all we can to make optimal use of the assets we have. If asked whether "We have done enough?" or whether "We have done all we wanted to?", the answer would surely be "No". But it is in the nature of trade unionists to always aspire to do more and to achieve greater things for working people and their families.

unionlearn with SERTUC

Many activities, events and changes have taken place during the past 12 months.

Accessing Higher Education in the Workplace

This project was funded for 15 months by Foundation Degree Forward and came to an end in September 2010. The aim was to provide opportunities for union members to progress into Higher Education and this was developed by the project worker Sean Ruddy. Sean also led on the production of a guide to assist ULRs in supporting their members in accessing Higher Education. Over 160 trade union members accessed Foundation Degrees. Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) were agreed with Kingston University, and with Birkbeck, University of London. Part of the agreement with Birkbeck University is that trade union members can get 10 per cent off course fees. In total Sean briefed over 400 ULRs from 16 unions across 60 workplaces on foundation degrees and higher learning opportunities. Sean has now left unionlearn and we wish him well in the future.

Recruiting ULRs in London

An ESF funded project to support TUs recruit ULRs ended on the 31 December 2010. Whilst the project presented a number of challenges (mainly to do with the

structure of ESF) a number of workplaces now have ULRs which otherwise would not have done so. With the end of this project and as a consequence Rickey Denton and Kelly Hillock left unionlearn, and again we wish them well in the future.

Apprenticeships

Unionlearn has continued to support the take up of apprenticeships across the region and we again held an event during Apprenticeship Week in February 2011, following on from our events in previous years. Briefings on apprenticeships have also been delivered across the region to union officers and ULRs. Unionlearn has actively supported attempts to increase opportunities for apprenticeships in London, where take up had been poor in the past, and we will be aiming to build on the increase in apprenticeship starts we managed during 2010-11.

Fred Grindrod, who worked on the Skills Recession and Recovery Project successfully applied for the national post of Apprenticeships policy and campaigns officer. Consequently, the vacancy created by Fred's promotion was filled by Stuart Barber after an internal application process. Stuart had worked with Rickey and Kelly on the London ESF Project.

Skills: Recession and Recovery

The national Skills: Recession and Recovery project will also be ending on the 31 March 2011. Engagement with unions has been effective with many keen to get involved with the project. A number of union meetings have been addressed, including branches whose members are currently under threat of redundancy.

The South East Regional Recovery Group has continued to provide integrated support from a range of partners to businesses and individuals during the recession, despite structural changes in a number of the organisations involved. It was designed to ensure they would benefit from clear signposting to the business and skills and employment support available to them such as workforce development, retraining, benefits and financial support and finding new jobs.

Through the Skills: Recession and Recovery project a strong trade union presence was established in the Regional Recovery Group (RRG) resulting in a number of valuable developments in the South East. Unionlearn SERTUC has provided briefings across the region to ULRs and officers.

Illustrating the fact that the project has also been about improving skills opportunities as well as mitigating the effects of the recession has been the organisation through the project

of the *Skill up, Green up!* event due to be held on 12 March.

Community Trade Union Learning Centre (CTU) at the Olympic site

The Learning Centre continues to provide working people with the opportunity of developing skills and knowledge. In the first 12 months CTU has engaged over 325 individuals with learning, and provided approximately 1,000 learning opportunities.

World Skills

Unionlearn continues to be involved in the development and planning stages of the World Skills event due to be held in London in 2011. Commonly referred to as the "Skills Olympics", this event offers the opportunity for young workers under 22 years of age to compete and develop their skills in a competitive environment, with awards for those who most impress the judges. Whilst not yet confirmed we are hoping to share with Prospect a stand at WorldSkills. As over 150,000 visitors to World Skills are anticipated, this should provide a good opportunity show the work unions are doing.

ESOL for Work

We engaged with a number of affiliates as part of a cross-regional project to assess and promote take up of the ESOL for Work



qualifications. The report on this is still pending but early findings indicated that whilst demand for ESOL provision remains strong there is reluctance amongst employers to pay for learners to take the full qualification. It is also quite rare for employers to allow learners to undertake learning during working hours, although some unions have been successful in negotiations around this. The full report on this project should be available soon.

Other Union Development Activity

Unionlearn Conference 2010

Once again the conference proved exceptionally popular, attracting over 300 participants. An innovation for this year was the opportunity for delegates to engage in some informal learning activities of their own, with the opportunity to enjoy guided walking tours of historical central London, the British Museum, or an open top bus tour.

Supporting Learners Event

We held another supporting learners event on 28 January 2011 offering the opportunity

for officers and ULRs to be updated on latest developments around the Adult Advancement and Careers Service and the on-line version of the unionlearn climbing frame as well as other opportunities to support learners.

Continuing on the theme of supporting learners, unionlearn SERTUC has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Next Step provider for the South East, which will enable us to work more closely together and monitor the effectiveness of IAG services offered to adults in the south east of England.

Brighton Pavilion learning centre

A learning centre was opened in the Brighton Pavilion in the summer of 2010. This is the first learning centre to be opened in a royal palace, demonstrating that unions are capable of opening opportunities for learners in the most unexpected of places.

Adult Learners Week

Once again take up for activities during Adult Learners' Week was very strong across the

unionlearn project worker Jane Warwick (standing) with learner at the Community Trade Union learning centre

region, with over 160 events across the region offering more than 17,200 learning opportunities.

Unionlearn Quality Award

A number of providers across the region have taken the opportunity to gain the unionlearn quality award. At the unionlearn national conference in July, Ruskin College was presented with this prestigious award.

Additionally, the following providers received the quality award at the unionlearn SERTUC Annual Conference from Dr Mary Bousted, general secretary ATL, and chair of unionlearn:

- Community and Trade Union Learning Centre for their ECDL programme with FBU
- Bullington POA Learning centre
- UCATT George Brumwell Learning Centre with Lewisham College
- Nescot College with FBU for its Distance Learning Programme

ULR Network Meetings

Well-attended ULR network meetings have been held during 2010 across the region and have featured speakers on subjects of interest such as the Right to Request time off to train, adult learners week, apprenticeships and Collective Learning Funds.

Future Development

In the next 12 months unionlearn SERTUC anticipates that there will be opportunities to develop links in new areas, such as greater engagement with community learning; and work around the theme of health and well being in the workplace to highlight two.

TUC Education

The Regional Education Service continues to work in partnership with 12 Colleges of Further Education and one Workers' Education Association. All TUC courses are accredited by the National Open College Network (NOCN) and provided free of charge to all affiliates. NOCN have now accredited the TUC programme for well over 10 years. In that time accreditation has become an essential part of the experience by rewarding learners' skills and knowledge and by recognising tutors' professionalism.

The size of the programme

In 2009 the Regional Education Service trained over 16,000 trade union reps, health and safety reps, and union learning reps. The 2010 figure will not be finalised until April but it is expected to be substantially lower than the 2009 figure. That is the result of courses being combined into longer qualifications. Where reps might have done two three-day courses previously those courses have now

been combined into one five-day course. On the face of it that would reduce the count of the number of reps trained by half, but when the greater opportunities for workplace activities are factored in, it is no exaggeration to say that the quality of training that each rep receives is enhanced by the move to the new delivery model.

The Union Professional Development programme, designed to support the training needs of all union staff, has been delivered on a regional basis for five years now. In that time it has become an important part of the Region's work. The popularity of new courses under this programme, including The Union Professional Officer and Reading Financial Accounts, testify to the on-going success of this programme, and to the outstanding professionalism of the tutors delivering it.

The Qualifications and Credit Framework

Since May 2007 the whole TUC Education programme has been incorporated into the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). The QCF will eventually include every vocational qualification offered in England so that the level and size of different qualifications can be compared. Similar frameworks are being developed in Scotland and Wales, as well as for Europe as a whole.

Therefore, under the QCF there are now qualifications available to reps, which are specific to reps' roles and are nationally recognised. Reps can achieve the

qualifications without sitting exams and they are usually at least the equal of anything possessed by the managers across the negotiating table. The three types of qualifications available, Awards, Certificates and Diplomas, recognise the relative size of the learning undertaken by the reps, and do not require reps to produce any more work than under the previous arrangement.

There have been many instances of delays and other problems in reps receiving their qualifications under the QCF, as providers and awarding bodies struggle to adapt systems, but the worst appears to be behind us now and reps certainly value the qualifications themselves.

Changes to Union Learning Rep training in 2010

There have been significant changes to the content and structure of the ULR training offer in the last year. As surveys have repeatedly shown that many ULRs are new to trade union activism, the new ULR stage 1 course will reflect the needs of these new reps. Taking 30 hours to complete (typically five days), it will focus on how trade unions are structured and organised for learning, how ULR functions and activities reflect union policies and government initiatives and how to develop a trade union approach to training and learning. The new ULR stage 2 course, also 30 hours in duration, builds upon stage 1 enabling a deeper understanding to be developed of the key

issues for ULRs and also provides an opportunity to undertake their own study on an issue that is relevant to their members and workplace.

Union Women Professionals' Summer School 2010

In June the region again had the privilege of hosting the Women's Summer School.

15 women union officers from a range of unions and roles attended. They commented on how the course had:

- helped them to update and expand their knowledge on the issues most relevant to the membership and on wider issues that could impact on their members
- develop their knowledge of international issues and how trade unions and their members can help to support exploited workers in other countries
- provided them with the opportunity to receive professional coaching with their personal presentation and speaking skills
- given them the opportunity to discuss issues and develop organising strategies with other union women officers
- helped them to refresh the approach to their union position, given them the energy, motivation and confidence to progress issues and themselves further in the union movement.

The general feeling of the course is that it is a valuable course for all women officers and that more women in union officers' positions

should be given the opportunity to attend, but also be informed about it by their senior union officers. The 2011 Summer School takes place from the 4 to 8 July, contact Theresa Daly for more information.

Other regional priorities for 2010

Last June an Equality Action Plan was agreed with Course Coordinators. This included items such as


- convening regular women's tutor group meetings
- working closely with Bananalink on issues of globalisation, Fairtrade and migration
- including an activity on LGBT issues on all core courses
- all providers to review the diversity of their tutor pools.

In the last year tutors in the region have delivered a large number of online courses as part of the national TUC Education strategy. That involves offering the full range of TUC courses, from Diplomas to short courses, both face-to-face and online. The level of participation of tutors on e-learning means that we are well placed to make a regional e-learning offer, and to use the skills developed in this new mode of delivery to enhance face-to-face and blended learning courses. Plans are also well advanced in producing short electronic resources to support reps' learning that tutors in the region will be actively contributing to the production of.

Women's Rights Committee



HISTORIC BUILDINGS OF BOW



45 NORMAN GROVE
E. SYLVIA PANKHURST
(1882 - 1960)
SET UP THE EAST LONDON TOY FACTORY
AND BABIES' NURSERY IN THIS HOUSE AND
THE BUILDING IN THE REAR GARDEN
1914 - 1934
THE FACTORY WAS FINANCED BY
NORAH LYLE-SMYTH
(1874 - 1963)

We started the year with a walking tour entitled "The Battling Belles of Bow" in East London, which was enjoyed by more than 20 sisters. The tour took us around Bow and we were shown a number of places where Sylvia Pankhurst lived, worked, educated, agitated and campaigned for women's rights. It was a wonderful evening and everyone had an educational and enjoyable time.

Our September meeting found us back at Congress House to hear Pippa Hockton from StreetTalk. This charity helps women

out of prostitution and slavery. Many of the women StreetTalk cares for have been trafficked into the UK and exploited thereafter. They are helped into education, into legal work, accommodation and health care – as well as being supported at the UK Border Agency to gain permission to remain in the UK. The Executive Committee agreed to our request for a donation to StreetTalk to help them continue this important work.

In October a delegation attended the Charter for Women conference. This was an excellent day and speakers included Professor Mary Davis, Angela Eagle MP, Sarah Veale, head of the TUC's Equality and Employment Rights Department, and Diana Holland, assistant general secretary of Unite.

In November, we were delighted to be able to welcome Finn Mackay from the London Feminist Network who spoke to us about the founding of the LFN and its aims and objectives, and the 'Reclaim the Night' march – which is a 'women only' event but the social at the end of the march welcomes all. Sisters went on the march and the SERTUC WRC banner went too!

In January, the London Metropolitan University were our hosts when we had a tour of the TUC archives by librarian Chris Coates. Chris showed us masses of historical information, pamphlets, leaflets and posters – as well as the original 'strike book' detailing the names, addresses, marital status and job title from the Bryant and May 'Match

Women's Strike'. We were also shown how to access the huge amount of information which is online and it proved to be a fascinating and educational evening – our thanks to Chris again for allowing us to access this information and material.

At the time of writing, we plan to celebrate International Women's Day with our colleagues from the TUC at Congress House when we will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of IWD. We will be highlighting the fight back against the disproportionate impact the global economic crisis has had on women all over the world. Women are more likely than men to be in vulnerable jobs, or to be unemployed, to lack social protection and to have limited access to and control over financial resources.

Nevertheless, despite this gloomy and depressing picture, sisters will be entertained by a group of singers including our own Gwen Cook, and speakers from Peru, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, as well as the deputy general secretary of the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions.

Our AGM will be held in May, as usual, and I should like to extend my thanks on behalf of the Committee and all sisters who have attended over the past year for all the hard work and unending support we have received from the office without which we would not function anywhere near as well!

Carolyn Simpson, Unite, Chair
Marjory Broughton, Unite, Vice Chair
Dorothy Amos, NUT, Secretary

Race Relations Committee

This was a very challenging year for working people and their families, for unions and trades councils in the region, and for the Committee itself.

The general and local election results, 6 May, were generally grim, with some local triumphs.

The coalition government's brutal deficit reduction programme and its determination to deconstruct the welfare state is a triple blow to Black and Asian workers and their families. It is estimated that 500,000 public sector jobs will be lost in the period to 2015, with 200,000 local authority jobs being lost in the next year alone. Since Black workers are disproportionately employed in the public sector, these job losses will impact more heavily upon the Black working age population as a whole. Secondly, though far from perfect, it is the public sector that has led the way in applying equal opportunities to recruitment, whilst the private sector is still awash with discriminatory and covertly racist recruitment practices. If jobs growth is to be dominated by the private sector Black and Asian workers will suffer even greater disadvantages in the labour market than they have endured in recent years. Thirdly, it is low income households that depend more heavily upon essential public services and those low income households are disproportionately Black and Asian.

This enormous set-back to equality of opportunity must be fought by all means possible, including administratively, legally and politically. The Committee responded robustly to the Mayor of London's consultation on a new Equality Strategy in a face to face meeting with Richard Barnes, Deputy Mayor of London, arguing that the strategy totally failed to factor in any of the consequences of the proposed spending cuts, and so it was worthless. The Committee has urged unions to use the absence of genuine 'equality impact assessment' to stall cuts and mobilise opposition against them in workplaces and communities.

And to promote the political response the Committee organised an open meeting with Black Activists Rising Against the Cuts (BARAC). The meeting was chaired by Milton McKenzie, Alexis Chase spoke for the Committee, and Zita Holbourne, PCS and a TUC National Race Relations Committee member, and Lee Jasper, former senior adviser to Ken Livingstone when he was Mayor of London, spoke for BARAC. More than 70 activists attended and all were urged to volunteer their skills to help build the BARAC campaign, to seek to establish local BARAC campaigns and to raise the profile of BARAC in their union branch and trades council.

The general and local elections brought us better news regarding the progress of fascist parties. We must not be complacent, because the BNP still gained 570,000 votes or one in every 50 votes cast, but it was great news that this was massively down on the support it gained at the European elections and Nick Griffin, the BNP's leader, was humiliated in Barking. Even more dramatic was the local election result in Barking and Dagenham, where the BNP hoped to take control of the Council. Following a massive campaign, with trade unions at the heart of it, the BNP lost all 12 of the seats it was defending and it was swept away by local voters who said 'not in our name, not in our borough'.

However, the decline of the BNP as a disruptive voice of hate politics in our communities has been mirrored by the rise of the English Defence League, with its campaign of hatred towards Muslims, its rejection of multiculturalism and diversity. It organised several demonstrations in our region this year that were violent and intended to be incendiary, such as its demonstration in Luton in February. The Committee supported the organisation of peaceful counter-demonstrations that emphasised the broad coalition against hatred and in favour of diverse communities.

The Committee was pleased to support the

ongoing programme of activity by the SERTUC Film Club, and SERTUC's Black History Celebrations. The Committee also noted the sad death of Jayaben Desai, Grunwick strike leader.

During the year Claude James continued as the TUC's representative on the Mary Seacole Memorial Statue Committee. He also attended the Anthony Walker Memorial Lecture in Liverpool on behalf of SERTUC and was SERTUC's observer delegate to the TUC's Black Workers Conference.

Members of the Committee acknowledge that their effectiveness as a campaign body was inhibited by the relatively small number of unions and trades councils that nominated to it in 2010 and the number of delegates that were nominated that did not attend a meeting during the year. Strengthening nominations to the Committee and building attendance will be a priority for the coming year. Our work was also hampered by disruption to its schedule of meetings, not least by the blizzards in December, and by serious illnesses suffered by both its chair and secretary. The Committee wishes them both a full recovery, meanwhile, 'the struggle goes on'.

Claude James, TSSA, Chair

Trish Gayle, Unison, Vice Chair

Dil Joshi, PCS, Vice Chair

Mark Benjamin, GLATUC, Secretary



International Committee

The Committee has 36 members drawn from eight trade unions (Community, CWU, GMB, NUT, PCS, UCU, Unison and Unite) and three CATUCs (Essex, Greater London and Oxfordshire).

June 2010: business meeting, guest speaker Didier Leiton Valverde, deputy general secretary of SITRAP (Costa Rican Plantation Workers' Union). Joint open meeting with Women's Rights Committee – guest speakers – Diana Holland, Unite assistant general secretary, and Carolina Amador Perez, Federación de Mujeres Cubanas (Federation of Cuban Women) attended by some 50 to 60 people.

September 2010: business meeting, guest speakers – Keith Bolender, author of *Voices from the Other Side: an oral history of terrorism against Cuba*, which deals with the terrorist acts perpetrated against the Cuban people by counter-revolutionary groups based in the USA, and Diana Holland, Unite assistant general secretary, report of recent ICTU Congress in Vancouver.

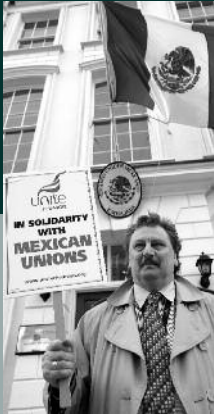
December 2010: business meeting, guest speaker Owen Tudor, head of TUC European Union and International Department, report of 2010 TUC Congress global solidarity business plus TUC International Development Strategy – combating poverty abroad and TUC International Strategy – aims to build stronger unions, rights at work

and a sustainable recovery. Open meeting on Gaza with Richard Allday and Russ Ball (*picture top right*), two Unite lorry drivers who had taken part in recent Viva Palestina overland convoy to Gaza, supported by Sarah Colborne – Palestine Solidarity Campaign and eye witness of storming of mv *Mavi Marmara* and Karen Mitchell – Thompsons solicitors.

March 2011: at the time of writing it is anticipated that a major international rally – Euro Unions Against Austerity – will have been held on Thursday 24 March in advance of the TUC demonstration against the cuts. Confirmed speakers include Christine Blower (NUT general secretary), Jimmy Kelly (Unite Irish regional secretary), Didier Louvet (CGT Nord-Pas de Calais), Fernando Puig-Samper from the CC.OO (Workers' Commissions, Spain), Owen Tudor (TUC) plus UK political and student speakers.

The chair of the International Committee (*Bernard Regan, pictured above*) spoke at the, now unfortunately annual, vigil in support of the Miami 5 outside the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square on 19 October. This is always a well attended event, some several hundred present including members of the Committee.

The chair and secretary were closely involved with the organisation of the SERTUC sponsored Latin America 2010, the



sixth in the series of annual solidarity conferences held on 4 December in Congress House with Walter Sandino, economist grandson of the famous Nicaraguan revolutionary leader, as the keynote speaker. Despite the appalling weather the conference was very well attended demonstrating a long term interest in the UK to learn about concrete alternatives to neo-liberalism and the movement towards socialism.

The secretary attended the demonstration outside the Israeli Embassy on 27 December marking the second anniversary of the bombardment of Gaza by Israeli forces and also the demonstration (*Adrian Weir pictured above*) outside the Mexican Embassy on 17 February in support of the Mexican miners' union facing increasing state harassment since 2006 following an explosion in the Pasta de Conchos coal mine that killed 65 miners.

At the time of writing, there is a surge of democratic uprisings against authoritarian rulers sweeping North Africa and the Middle East. In Tunisia it is clear that the trade union movement, organised in the UGTT, has been to the fore in the movement for change. The chair of the

International Committee spoke at the demonstration on 5 February in support of the Egyptian uprising. There was a further rally on 12 February in Trafalgar Square, both events receiving support from members of the Committee. Trade unionists will welcome all these moves to establish new, democratic governments that allow free trade unionism to flourish, but the impending change in Egypt is so particularly important as it could be a prelude to lifting the siege of Gaza, albeit that the Egyptian army casts a long shadow over the unfolding events.

Bernard Regan, NUT, Chair
Adrian Weir, Unite, Secretary

Useful references

- www.bananalink.org.uk/content/views/57117/lang.en
- www.muieres.cubaweb.cu and in English
- www.hellocuba.ca/itineraries/201FMC.html
- www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/news.asp?ItemID=1882
- www.ituc-csi.org/+congress-+.html
- www.tuc.org.uk/the_tuc/index.cfm?mins=363&minors=62&majorsubjectID=19
- www.vivapalestina.org
- www.palestinecampaign.org

Disabilities Network



left to right John Ball, Tara Shah, Nicholas Russell

The Disabilities Network has met four times this year and is attracting a large and growing attendance. At the AGM Tara Shah was elected as chair, Nicholas Russell as vice-chair and John Ball, then SERTUC policy officer, acted as secretary. Unfortunately, with the changes to Regional Development Agencies, funding from SEEDA was not renewed for John's post at SERTUC and Nicholas Russell replaced him as secretary. The Network would like to place on record its thanks to John for his excellent service as our secretary since its inception in 2006 and wish him well for the future. We also thank the SERTUC office for their continued support, particularly Darren Lewis who makes sure that information always gets circulated on a timely basis.

The Network has heard from Dr Caroline Allen, principal of Orchard Hill College for young people with learning difficulties, Roderick Cobley from the London Autistic Rights Movement on the difficulties faced by people suffering from this illness, Marcius Kurowski, policy manager from the Equality and Human Rights Commission speaking on their enquiry on disability target violence, and Richard Williams from Thompsons solicitors speaking on the impact of the new Equality Act, and what has changed and what has not, for disabled people. All these presentations led to lively discussions from which we all learnt.

The network also sent an observer delegate to the TUC Disability Conference and met with senior officers at the GLA on their Disability Equality Scheme. We continue to make sure that shared surface schemes do not make streets no go areas for disabled people and to attend meetings of a network of organisations campaigning on this issue.

As the year has progressed the effects of the cuts on disabled people has become a major concern and we are planning an action to protest against the cuts and their disproportionate affect on disabled people.

Tara Shah, Unite, Chair
Nicholas Russell, Unison, Secretary

Young Members' Network

Since reconstitution in May, the SERTUC Young Members Network has been increasingly active. Reconstituting with nominees from a wide range of unions the network immediately moved to improve its own structure. Stu Melvin of USDAW and Kelly Hockley of Unite were elected chair and secretary respectively and the group expressed its intention to open itself up to all trade unionists across the region who fall within their own union's definition of a 'young member'. Following SERTUC Executive Committee approval, this move gives the network the ability to bring in much larger numbers of young trade unionists, allowing real communication and joint activity across the young membership of most major unions.

Getting active at a time of fear and anger at ConDem government attacks on trade unionists and the entire working class, but also hope and inspiration as thousands of young people took to the streets to defend education for future generations, the YMN made immediate practical agreements. Firstly, we agreed to work hard mobilising young members and others onto the streets to support student and young worker orientated demonstrations across London, Manchester and the rest of UK. Members of SERTUC YMN not only hit the streets with our peers, but actively helped the mobilisations, being involved in local anti-cuts campaigns, our own union branches, Young Members Networks, and trades councils.

Maybe even more importantly, we recognised that on the one hand the average age of a trade unionist is increasing steadily, whilst on the other hand huge numbers of young people are getting angry and active, joining protest movements across the country. With this in mind, we agreed that the SERTUC Young Members Network can play a valuable role in making the most of this new political generation, by acting as organising ambassadors for trade unionism, linking the student movement to trade unionism and recruiting newly active young people into trade unions.

So we have carried out questionnaires on campuses, held a 'Know Your Rights' pub quiz and organised two training days for young members to take place in March and April respectively (a media day and an introduction to organising). The second of these has been carefully designed with the TUC Organising Academy to excite new young members, giving them a taste of how to organise and get the best benefit out of trade union membership.

With places on both these days filling up quickly, many new links being made with student activists, and new nominees coming forwards from Community, UCU and NUT ready for reconstitution in May, SERTUC Young Members Network is sure to continue its active and positive role in 2011-12.

Stu Melvin, USDAW, Chair
Kelly Hockley, Unite, Secretary

Public Services Committee



Martin Powell-Davies, NUT, and Tom Taylor, PCS were elected respectively as chair and secretary at the AGM of the SERTUC Public Services Committee. The Committee has since met regularly. Kevin Courtney, NUT, Ian Lehair, FBU, and Megan Dobney, SERTUC, have addressed our meetings, and John Medhurst and Rico Tortalano, PCS Research Department, gave a presentation on the privatisation agenda.

There has been a necessary focus on the anti-cuts campaign, both in terms of support for events at national, regional and local level as well as developing support for the trade union alternative to the neo-liberal agenda. This has included the organisation of a conference on campaigning to defend public services and circulating various campaign materials, such as the PCS pamphlet on tax

justice (which provides the basis for the alternative to cuts) and TUC publications.

The conference was held in Congress House in November and marked another important step in building a united campaign in defence of public services. The main session featured contributions from Christine Blower, NUT, Gail Cartmail, Unite, Richard Murphy, Tax Justice Network, and Heather Wakefield, Unison. This was followed by workshops which looked at the impact of the cuts in education, the equalities agenda, health, privatisation, pensions and the voluntary and community sector. Finally, workshops were held which considered how the anti-cuts campaign could be developed in each of the three SERTUC areas (ie. East of England, London and the South East), before Megan Dobney closed

PSC conference. *left to right* equality workshop with Carolyn Simpson and Scarlett Harris; PSC officers Martin Powell-Davies and Tom Taylor

CLIC

Construction

the conference by highlighting the key dates and activities in the months ahead.

The Committee has also received regular reports on a range of potential and actual disputes from affiliates across the public sector and has offered our support as required. Most notably, we assisted the FBU in establishing a 'Solidarity Network' when they took industrial action in response to management threats to sack the entire London workforce. A well-attended meeting was held which was addressed by Mick Shaw, FBU, John McDonnell MP, and Martin Gould, SERTUC. A leaflet was also produced which set out the steps trade unionists could take to support FBU members.

Finally, the PSC has a busy year ahead. We anticipate the development of a co-ordinated programme of industrial action by public sector unions at national level following the TUC national demonstration in March. This will pose new challenges both in terms of building support for our programme as well as developing solidarity with our colleagues in struggle. Our AGM is being held on 19 April and we encourage every public sector union to ensure a full delegation attends in order that we can develop a strategy that will meet the challenges that face us over the year ahead.

Martin Powell-Davies, NUT, *Chair*
Tom Taylor, PCS, *Secretary*

SERTUC's **Creative and Leisure Industries Committee** has had a rather slow year, but has revived over the last months.

SERTUC vice-president Tony Lennon has pledged his support, as a BECTU member, to ensure a more active 2011-12.

Equally our **Construction Committee** has had a somewhat inactive year.

We hope that the new Regional Council year will see more action.



LGBT Network

Since the last reconstitution of SERTUC in April 2010, the SERTUC LGBT Network has continued to be productive and in the latter part of the year involved in the anti-ConDem cuts efforts.

In June we supported a fringe meeting organised by Left Front Art at the *Morning Star* conference, which our secretary was one of the speakers along with Deirdre Costigan, LGBT Labour, and Peter Purton of Left Front Art. Left Front Art was set up to encourage progressive debate within the LGBTQ communities.

Start of July saw the TUC LGBT Conference. Our secretary Thierry Schaffauser (GMB) was SERTUC's observer. The Network organised and hosted a well-attended fringe meeting at the Conference with the *Morning Star* on the way forward following the May elections. The panel of speakers were Maria Exall, TUC LGBT Committee, Deirdre Costigan, LGBT Labour, Simon Leahy, OUT East, and it was chaired by Anton Johnson, SERTUC Executive LGBT seat.

As in previous years we placed a recruitment advert in the Pride London edition of *QX* and a greetings notice in the *Morning Star*.

In July the Network's regular meeting had a presentation from Daryl Strawson of OUT East on Hackney Pride that was held in

September. Hackney Pride, organised by OUT East and supported by Greater London Association of Trade Union Councils, Hackney TUC, GMB SHOUT!, Unite London & Eastern Region, and SERTUC amongst other trade union bodies, was in response to homophobic and transphobic attacks in the borough in April last year. We were very involved with Hackney Pride, our secretary is the current chair of OUT East and our banner was on the march. Hackney Pride set out to be non-commercial, a community Pride event bringing the different communities in Hackney together and was a great success with a packed rally in Shoreditch Church that was addressed by Betty Gallacher, Unite London & Eastern LGBT Committee chair, and David Braniff-Herbert from Hope Not Hate LGBT Network. There was a Unite stall at the event with a great deal of interest in trade unions.

In August we staffed the TUC stall at Brighton & Hove Pride.

In October we hosted an open meeting on the ConDem cuts and the impact on LGBT communities and what we should be doing that was addressed by our regional secretary Megan Dobney. From that meeting it was agreed to produce a simple card that could be distributed around the LGBTQ scene in the Region alerting people to the effects of



In February the Network marked LGBT History Month – this year the theme was Queer Noise, and the event was focussed on building support for the anti-cuts resistance and the TUC national demonstration. We continued our tradition of producing a ground breaking event, this time jointly organised with LiNK the team of Queer GMB activists who bring the art/political event Behind Bars. It was held at Mass in Brixton and was opened by SERTUC vice-president Linda Perks, with speeches about the anti-cuts campaigns by Greg Randall, *Queers Against the Cuts*, and Thierry Schaffauser

left to right Queer Noise host Rev. Scapegoat, and Linda Perks

the cuts and challenging the myth put out by the ConDems. These cards have been produced with support from Unite London & Eastern Region and at time of writing this report are being distributed around LGBTQ venues. The meeting was chaired by Anton.

January saw the launch of a LGBTQ anti-cuts campaign group – *Queers Against the Cuts*. The launch meeting was chaired by our secretary, Thierry Schaffauser, and has gone on to be an umbrella for community initiatives around the country doing actions against the ConDem cuts and giving a LGBTQ presence in the anti-cuts movements. *Queers Against the Cuts* will be working closely with the TUC LGBT Committee and Maria Exall, the chair of that committee, was also present at the launch meeting. Network activists are actively involved in *Queers Against the Cuts* and their plans include street theatre in Old Compton Street to draw attention to the TUC demonstration in March this year.

In December the Network hosted a successful reception to mark International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers that was organised by the GMB Adult Entertainment Branch and supported by GMB SHOUT!, Equity South Thames Variety Branch, and the Unite London & Eastern Region LGBT Committee. The reception was addressed by Labour MP John

McDonnell, Maria Exall, TUC LGBT Committee, Linda Kietz, SERTUC Women's Rights Committee, and speakers in the field of sex work including a reading of names of those sex workers who had been killed.

The feedback was that the event was informative and the GMB Adult Entertainment Branch received enquiries on joining the union from sex workers present.

At the end of 2010 Network members took our banner on the vigil organised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and CND to remember Gaza outside the Israeli Embassy in west London.

At our regular meeting in February the topic was an update on anti-cuts work and Anton Johnson gave a presentation on what was happening in our Region, which was followed by a discussion.

Another busy year for the Network, through our card campaigns and events like Hackney Pride and the event in February we continue to give trade unions a high visible presence in the LGBTQ communities; and at the February meeting we have already started discussions on activity for 2011-2012.

Tamsin Piper, Unite, Co-Chair
Ben Wallington, ASLEF, Co-Chair
Thierry Schaffauser, GMB, Secretary

Transport Industries

Network

The TIN met five times in the year (four regular meetings and one special meeting) and was active in putting to SERTUC initiatives through the EC (particularly meetings with the London Mayor and in relation to the Olympics).

Three of the TIN meetings were open to those beyond the delegates and covered presentations by the ODA and the CrossRail project (August 2010 Richard George ODA Head of Public Transport; September 2010 Charles Devereux CrossRail Railway services manager/Head of Rail Operations; December 2010 ODA Gareth Epps Community Relations Manager; update on CrossRail following the government's finance statement).

Another meeting had a presentation by RMT (Paul Cox and Phil Boorman) on current issues affecting their members.

Whilst looking at all aspects of transport as affecting those working in the industries and trade unionists as transport users, certain concerns were followed more closely. These included: policy matters and disputes on the rail network; London Underground; the London bus network; rural bus services and urban bus provision outside London; dock developments in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft; the key projects expanding Felixstowe port and the associated transport links (notably the east-to-the-

Midlands rail link); the Olympics both the specific provision for the Games and the wider impact on transport links across the whole region; the CrossRail project again with effects right across the region; airport developments across the Region including the position of British Airways with the major dispute and the merger with Iberia; river and canal transport development; bicycle policies and developments; maintenance of various passes and ticketing for pensioners, those with disabilities and young people; the busway disaster Cambridge-Huntingdon.

The change of government and the use of the 'financial crisis' as an excuse to introduce cuts and fare rises has accelerated attacks on public transport provision and led to resurrecting failed privatisation policies. We have witnessed strange vanity projects like Boris Johnson's 'new bus' which has wasted some £11 million of public money so far. There is also the strange rush to remove station staff on rail and tube in direct contradiction of passenger wishes and stated aims about safety and security.

TIN has kept three issues regularly reviewed – the failure to develop a properly structured provision of rural and small urban areas transport and the impact on economic development and different user groups; the need for a comprehensive transport

Pensioners Network

approach for an adequate link from East Anglian ports and centres to the Midlands based around a good rail link; union members as the largest transport user group fully utilising that position.

TIN has been particularly assisted by the detailed practical knowledge and input of delegates which has ensured the deliberations are particularly focussed. In this respect the role of assistant secretary Joel Kosminsky and vice-chair Mark Steele has been important over a long period.

Roger Sutton, GLATUC, Chair
Mark Steele, ASLEF, Vice-Chair
Peter Kavanagh, Unite, Secretary
Joel Kosminsky, TSSA, Assistant Secretary

The Pensioners Network has continued to hold very well-attended meetings during the year and following the departure of John Ball has been pleased to welcome the voluntary support of activist Dick Muskett. So it's grateful thanks to both John and Dick.

Current work has focussed on the organisation, led by a sub-group from the Network, of their *Organising Conference* in March.

SERTUC Pensioners Network members are all nominated by their respective unions' retired members organisations and the conference intends to ensure that the Network engages not only their nominated representatives, but also reaches into the RMAs and any local pensioners' organisation that they are involved with.

A wide variety of speakers are poised to contribute, including Val Shawcross from the London Assembly (special interests are transport, the safety of Londoners, and improvements in London's public services), Neil Duncan-Jordan from the National Pensioners Convention, Allison Roche from Unison, Richard Brooks *Private Eye*, Nony Ardill from the Equality & Human Rights Commission, and Andrew Morris, principal officer at the NUT.

John Rodd, Unite, Chair
Paul Smith, NASUWT, Secretary

Local activities and trades union councils



Since the general election in May workers across the Region have been spreading the message that the government's onslaught is not inevitable, not necessary, and not fair. At the forefront of activity at the community level have been trades councils. And there are now nearly 60 trades councils registered with the TUC in the SERTUC region, including four new trades councils: Eastbourne, Greenwich & Bexley, Reading and Thanet.



But trades councils have not only been campaigning against the attack on public services, but also carrying out "business as usual" by celebrating May Day, supporting unions in industrial dispute and their communities. The next pages are a snapshot of some of the activities reported to the SERTUC office.





Cities of
London and
Westminster



Andover trades council organised its second public meeting on the cuts with a platform that included not only trades unionists, but also Haydn Watkins of Andover's Older People's Forum and Julian Jones, a student at University College London.

At the end of January 2011 **Barnet** trades council worked with local unions to demonstrate their opposition to Barnet Council's cuts to services. A march through the town was followed by a rally, addressed by (amongst others) TUC deputy general secretary Frances O'Grady, who said "We can see Barnet is a window on Cameron's Britain. This is the way he wants all of Britain to go. Never mind easyjet this is Ryanair public services. Not necessarily cheap but definitely nasty."

Bedford trades council celebrated May Day 2010 and welcomed Bronwyn Halfpenny, the Industrial & Campaigns Officer for the Victorian Trades Hall Council in Australia.

In July, with the Mayor of Bedford Borough, Dave Hodgson, they unveiled a bust of anti-apartheid leader Archbishop Trevor Huddleston who was born in Bedford.

February 2011 the campaign is on to defend Bedford's nursery schools.

In **Brent** the trades council has been instrumental in the formation of Brent Fightback and the Kilburn Unemployed Workers' Centre. Brent Fightback is campaigning to persuade Brent Central Liberal Democrat MP Sarah Teather to leave the

coalition, building support for the TUC demonstration on the 26 March, and fighting against the slashing of public sector jobs and public services in Brent.

They are also organising a tribute event to the late Jayaben Desai, leader of the 1976-7 Grunwick dispute who died in December 2010.

Chelmsford trades council organised a performance of Banner Theatre's *Stop The Cuts* enjoyed by 75 people from Chelmsford, Braintree, Southend and Harlow.

At a public meeting it was unanimously agreed to launch a local campaign against the government's and Essex County Council's cuts in public services. Approximately 70 people attended, representing trade unions, political parties and community groups. Since then they have been leafletting, campaigning and lobbying.

On 8 March, they will be celebrating International Women's Day with an exhibition and attending a vigil for the unemployed in Chelmsford Cathedral, and three events are planned for Workers' Memorial Day on 28 April.

Cities of London and Westminster trades council has been working with PCS London and SE Region and set up the Westminster & City Anti-Cuts Campaign which has been organising leafletting and public meetings. Above is president Dan Ingreji with assistant secretary Dil Joshi on Budget Day 2010.

In **Colchester** the 30th Alternative Oyster Feast was organised by the trades council and local Labour Party activists. Established in



response to Colchester Council's Town Hall Oyster Feast, the labour movement event provided fish and chips, bingo, short speeches and prizes for over 100 Colchester pensioners.

Outside of the fight against the public sector spending cuts **Dover** trades council's main activity has been fighting the back door privatisation of the Port of Dover, with public meetings, leafleting and lobbying in the local press.

Newly established **Eastbourne** trades council circulates copies of its *Eastbourne in Union* newsletter to 120 trade unionised workplaces in the town. Features include GMB's fight against cuts to ambulance service wages, promotion of the TUC's 26 March demonstration, and teachers' pensions.

They are also promoting an annual award to commemorate the contribution of Len Caine, a former TGWU activist.

The Greater London Association of Trades Union Councils (**GLATUC**) was again a senior partner in the London May Day Organising Committee and ensured London's May Day march was vibrant and successful. Thousands marched from Clerkenwell Green to the rally in Trafalgar Square where they were addressed by speakers from GMB, PCS, RMT, SERTUC, UCU and Tony Benn.

Great Yarmouth has campaigned against the cuts proposed by the Council with demonstrations and interrogation of the elected councillors.



Haringey trades council supported Council trade unions, principally Unison and NUT, in their anti-cuts demonstration.

in **Hackney** the trades council was instrumental in establishing *Hackney Unites*, realising just how much they could achieve working with community and campaigning groups in the borough. A summer community conference attracted over 400 participants, and Hackney Unites also runs a Workers Advice Project bringing together trade unionists and employment lawyers to support people with problems at work.

Since the campaign **Ipswich** trades council set up in July, the Suffolk coalition FOR Public Services, they have had an Ipswich march of 700 people, public meeting, Saturday stalls in the town centre, a library protest, regular meetings with ever-increasing attendance, BBC TV *Look East* coverage, BBC Radio Suffolk coverage and



regular interviews, door to door leafleting in conjunction with Unison, and a build up of contacts across the county.

Lambeth trades council ran a 'Union Village' at last summer's Lambeth Country Show, has held two open meetings on the ConDem economic policies, met with one of the local MPs, developed links with local anti-cuts groups and Labour Parties, and supported the *Morning Star* and CND. On the SERTUC Day of Action in January they created a 'cardboard city' in Brixton getting coverage in the local press, and joined with town hall unions in a lobby of the Cabinet and Council meetings.

On the Isle of Wight, **Newport** trades council organised a march of 1,000 people to protest against IoW council cuts. The march was led by a samba band and got coverage on local TV and radio as well as in the local press. The trades council has also met with the IoW Chamber of

Commerce to discuss promoting business and employment on the island which was hard hit by the recession.

Portsmouth trades council distributed hundreds of leaflets from their street stall on May Day 2010.

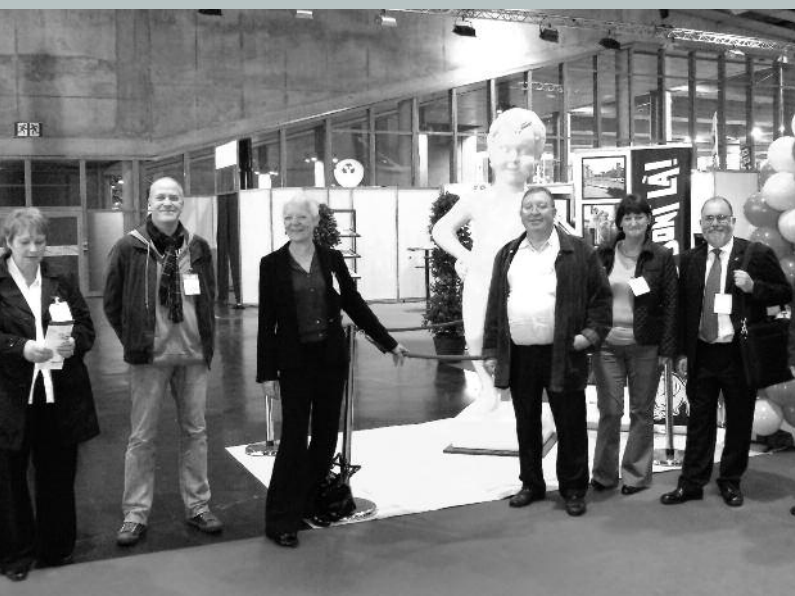
In **Southampton** the trades council has been supporting workers and services under threat, including Unison members in local libraries and the NUJ at Newsquest over pay. They supported the march organised by Unison and Unite, and are active in Southampton United for Public Services.

Inter-regional TUC



SERTUC continues to play a major role in the Inter-regional TUC (CSI) with trade union confederations from Nord-Pas de Calais in France, and Hainaut and West Flanders in Belgium.

In the run up to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, European confederations are promoting the 'fair play' agenda focussing on those companies in the region that will be producing goods for the Games. *left* the CSI Committee wearing ACV campaign hats!



Again we took a delegation to the Salon Lille, a showcase for French works councils, and participated in the trade union meeting held during the event. *left* the SERTUC delegation including Megan Dobney, regional secretary, John Ball, pensions speaker, Geraldine O'Connell, Prospect national secretary, Nigel Titchen, Prospect president.

SERTUC officers and staff

President

Vice Presidents

Treasurer

Regional Secretary

Regional Campaigns and Policy Officer

Project Worker

Administrative Secretary

Unionlearn Regional Manager

Regional Education Officers

Regional Union Development Co-ordinator

Regional Development Workers

Skills, Recession & Recovery Development Workers

Eastern

London

South East

Community & Trade Union Learning Centre

Manager

Project Worker

Admin/Receptionist

Administrative Secretary

Administrative Assistants

Martin Gould

Tony Lennon

Linda Perks

Carolyn Simpson

Megan Dobney

Laurie Heselden

Ellenor Hutson

Darren Lewis

Barry Francis

Rob Hancock

Theresa Daly

Jon Tennison

Mick Hadgraft

Adrian Ryan

Katie Curtis

Stuart Barber

Colin Lloyd

Phil Spry

Jane Warwick

Tanya Nelson

Sonia Dawson

Johanna Garcia

Jaspal Ghtoray

Natasha Owusu

020 7467 1291

020 7467 1292

020 7467 1374

020 7467 1220

020 7467 1209

020 7467 1369

020 7467 1238

020 7467 1212

020 7467 1298

020 7467 1385

01279 408 188

020 7467 1251

01444 459 733

020 3288 5522

020 3288 5521

020 3288 5522

020 7467 1251

01279 408 188

020 7467 1248

020 7467 1368

all email addresses are first name initial followed by surname@tuc.org.uk

Executive Committee attendance 2011



Trade union section

ASLEF	Mark Steele	6
BECTU	Tony Lennon	8
CWU	Terry Jackson	8
CWU	John Denton	6
FBU	Ian Leahair	4
GMB	Richard Ascough	6
NASUWT	Keith Anderson	5
PCS	Tom Taylor	9
TSSA	Joel Kosminsky	8
Unison	Greg Grant	3
Unison	Linda Perks	4
Unison	Phil Wood	7
Unite	Martin Gould	7
Unite	Steve Hart	6
Unite	Jim Kelly	5

Women's seats

CWU	Dianne Hill	8
GMB	Evelyn Martin	5
Unite	Teresa Mackay	7

Young trade unionist

RMT	Adrian Rowe*	
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Black trade unionists

GMB	Milton McKenzie	7
PCS	Dil Joshi	6
Unison	Gloria Hanson	6

Disabled trade unionist

Community	Gareth Davies	4
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LGBT trade unionist

Unite	Anton Johnson	9
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County Associations

GLATC	Roger Sutton	9
Hants CATC	Louis Mac Donald	6
IoW CATC	Mike Nobbs	6
Oxon CATC	Sue Tibbles	8
Suffolk CATC	Richard Chilvers	6

Attendances are from a possible total of 9
(the April 2011 meeting is not included)

* resigned part way through year

** this is a shared seat

TUCJCC**

London & SE	Linda Kietz	6
Eastern	Michael Fletcher	2

Delegate monitoring



Attendance at meetings of the Regional Council 2010-2011

Meeting	Union delegates	Unions	CATC delegates	Total	(2009-10)
April	74	17	21	95	(104)
July	56	17	18	74	(86)
October	52	12	20	72	(83)
January	55	13	19	74	(72)

Gender monitoring

	Total	Male	Female
Regional Council (nominated)	162	107	55
Executive Committee (elected)	32	24	8

Ethnic monitoring

	White	Afro Caribbean	African	Asian	Other	No response
Regional Council (nominated)	140	6	1	6	3	6
Executive Committee (elected)	27	3	0	1	1	0

Campaign account

1 January to 31 December 2010

Receipts

Interest	22.25
<i>Campaign Fund donations (2009)</i>	
CWU Eastern Region	800.00
CWU London Region	1,600.00
CWU South East Region	800.00
FBU Region 9	100.00
FBU London Region	1,000.00
NUJ	528.96
Unison London Region	2,200.00
WRC tour fees	85.00
Amicus Kingston UpRise donation	50.00

Payments

<i>Advertisements</i>	
PPPS Jack Amos	250.00
PPPS Lou Lewis	194.76
PPPS May Day	200.00
PPPS New Year	185.63
PPPS Sid Staden	200.00
PPPS Viking Ruffert event	160.15
<i>Affiliations</i>	
Abortion Rights	75.00
ACTSA	40.00
Baby Milk Action	115.00
Banana Link	85.00
Charter for Women	100.00
CND	75.00
Cuba Solidarity	50.00
International Brigade Memorial Trust	125.00
Justice for Colombia	100.00
Liberation	35.00
London Hazards Centre	80.00
Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign	75.00
NPC	15.00
Palestine Solidarity Campaign	50.00
Socialist Health Association	25.00
Socialist Renewal	20.00
White Ribbon Campaign	50.00
<i>Delegate fees</i>	
Abortion Rights	5.00
Charter for Women	116.30
CND	257.11
National Pensioners Convention	249.14
<i>Donations</i>	
ACTSA	50.00
Banana Link Guatemalan appeal	50.00
Burstion Strike School Rally	600.00
Construction Safety Campaign	100.00
CoolTan Arts	100.00
Ipswich May Day	500.00
LCDTU	50.00
Leigh Folk Festival	100.00
London May Day Organising Committee	1,200.00
London Socialist Film Society	25.00
Norwich Pride	100.00

Summary SERTUC Campaign Account

Balance in bank at 1 January 2010

Current account	1,000.00
2 Week account	20,297.30
Total 1 January 2010	21,297.30
Add Receipts	7,186.21
	28,483.51
Subtract payments	10,250.77
	18,232.74
Credit balance at 31 December 2010	£18,232.74

Ragged Trousered Philanthropists	500.00
Street Talk	100.00
Unite Against Fascism	100.00
UpRise	3,050.00
York Disabled Workers Co-operative	200.00
Alfemax Ltd Black Flash film	313.73
Hackney Unites stall	20.00
Trades councils conference fares	8.95
WRC walking tour fee	150.00

Sylvia Pankhurst account

Receipts

Interest	16.69
Donations	435.00
T-shirt sales	10.00
Sale of cards	6.00

Payments

PPPS web listing	20.00
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Summary Sylvia Pankhurst Memorial Committee

Balance in bank at 1 January 2010

Current account	2,448.34
Reserve account	16,675.67
Total 1 January 2010	19,124.01
Add Receipts	467.69
	19,591.70
Subtract payments	20.00
	19,571.70

Credit balance at 31 December 2010 £19,571.70

